

Ethnicity, Community and 'Local' Football

A Historical and Sociological study of an African-Caribbean football club in the East Midlands c.1970-2010

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Abstract

This is a historical and sociological case study of an East Midlands-based, African-Caribbean-founded football club, Meadebrook Cavaliers c.1970 – 2010. Essentially, it is in response to a relative lack of research on the British African-Caribbean male experience in leisure and sport; and of ‘race’ and local level (‘grass-roots’) football club social histories in the UK.

Findings are gleaned from an analysis of sources traditionally employed by historians and data extrapolated through the use of ethnographic and interview techniques. This includes data collected during the researcher’s observations as a participant within the club (as a club member and player over a two-year period). Attention is paid to the formation of this largely masculine ‘black’ space; the effects of sporting success on this club’s capacity to remain representative of the local African-Caribbean community (especially men); and on how, and in what ways, the development of local black football clubs has been influenced by more recent social, economic and political developments at both the local and national levels. In doing so, the thesis demonstrates how the sporting, spatial and social development of this football club has been intimately connected to changes in the wider political, social and sporting terrains within which the club has been located. It also empirically and explicitly connects the growth and changing functions of the organisation to the changing attitudes, social realities and identity politics of the club’s largely African-Caribbean male membership and to the changing demands and expectations over time of the wider black community.

The thesis shows how the club moved from its origins as a parks-based team to becoming a successful senior level football club, and finally to achieving charitable status. In doing so, it also provides an example of the ways in which longitude studies of minority ethnic and local football clubs are particularly useful in the exploration of the changing social identities and cultural dynamics of the BAME communities that constitute them. In this case, the club as a space of sport and community provides a lens through which we can see and ‘track’ how diverging experiences of social mobility, well-being, integration and racism during the last four decades, have contributed to the emergence of markedly different inter and intra-generational perceptions of what it means to be ‘black’ in this context – and thus to an increasingly heterogeneous African-

Caribbean identity in late-modern Britain. Importantly, the thesis also argues that local football has, at various points during the last four decades, been both a unifying and fracturing force in helping to shape the experiences and identities of local African-Caribbean men within the region.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| AGM | Annual General Meeting |
| BAC | British African-Caribbean |
| BAME | Black Asian and Minority Ethnic |
| BME | Black Minority Ethnic |
| BoBB | Black or Black British |
| CCF | Community Cohesion Fund |
| CCP | Community Cohesion Plans |
| CFA | County Football Association |
| CML | Central Midlands League |
| FA | Football Association |
| LSL | Leicestershire Senior League |
| LUCA | Leicester United Caribbean Association |
| MCCP | Meadebrooks Community Coaching Project |
| MTP | Meadebrooks Training Project |
| SSPP | School Sports Partnerships Programme |
| STARS | Sports Training and Recreation Scheme |

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The social history of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities in Britain is an area of study which has largely been neglected.¹ This is especially noticeable within the body of work concerned with the social history of Britain's East Midlands region. In a special edition of *Midland History*, for example, Dick and Dundrah draw attention to the fact that during the journal's 40 year history, there has been 'little focus on the history of ethnic minorities'.² This is despite the fact that many of the conurbations within this region have been home to 'international' communities since the 1700s.³ It is also despite the fact that since the end of World War Two, the East Midlands has been home to a number of small, but visible, immigrant communities from the old British Empire.

A similar trend is present within the history of sport. In Holt and Mason's otherwise seminal *Sport in Britain: 1945-2000*, for example, little attention is given to the influence which black-British sportsmen and women have had on many of Britain's most popular sports, such as Boxing, Cricket, Athletics, Rugby and Football – or vice versa.⁴ Likewise, Hill's *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain* makes only a fleeting reference to race. This is in the context of cricket as a sport which was on-the-one-hand, replete with colonial discourses; and on-the-other, a source of 'national pride' for many first and second-generation immigrants from the commonwealth, especially during the 1970s and 1980s.⁵ There are, however, some noteworthy exceptions. Eminent scholar, Tony Collins, for example, provides a welcome exploration of the presence of BAME communities and sportsmen in Rugby

¹ Throughout this thesis the terms 'African-Caribbean', 'black', 'black-British' and 'blackness' will be used interchangeably

² Malcolm Dick and Rajinder Dundrah, 'Introduction: Ethnic Community Histories in the Midlands' *Midland History* (36) 2 (2011) pp.143-48 p143

³ Ibid. p145

⁴ Richard Holt and Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain 1945-2000* (Oxford, 2000)

⁵ Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure & Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 2002) p17

League in twentieth century Britain.⁶ He traces this from the emergence of a large Jewish presence within the game, especially in northern cities during the late 1800s to the emergence of a large number of African-Caribbean players who, from the 1960s onwards, he argues, 'were such a common sight on Rugby league pitches that it almost ceased to be a matter for comment.'⁷ Additionally, Williams devotes the entire attention of his 2001 work to the relationship between *Cricket and Race*.⁸ Furthermore, it is one of the few texts which contains a chapter explicitly concerned with the experiences of BAME sportsmen within local level sport, and on the history of local ('recreational') BAME cricket clubs across Britain.⁹

Scholarly enquiries into Britain's BAME communities have largely ignored the black experience within leisure and sport, or seldom investigated the role of these spaces as key sites of 'race relations'. This absence is again noticeable within research into the black experience within the East Midlands. In one of the first extensive pieces of research into 'race relations' in Nottingham, for example, Lawrence, like many other sociologists and historians, focuses solely on the black experience within housing, employment and politics.¹⁰ Perhaps the biggest irony of a book concerned with race relations, which gives no mention to leisure or sport, is that on its front cover is a picture of black and white children playing football *together* on a local park. Subsequently, leisure has been generally excluded from the study of the everyday black experience. As a result we currently know little in a socio-historical sense with regards to the black experience beyond housing, employment and front-line politics.

⁶ Tony Collins, *Rugby League in Twentieth Century Britain: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxon, 2006), Chapter 10: 'The working man's game: class, gender and race'

⁷ Ibid. p156

⁸ Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxon, 2001)

⁹ Ibid. Chapter 7: 'Playing the Game: Race and Recreational Cricket'

¹⁰ Daniel Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives* (London, 1974). Also see Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* (London, 1988); John Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass* (Aldershot, 1988); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1991); Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States* (Oxford, 1998); Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London, 2006)

In many ways this situation reflects the low-standing placed on the study of sport in academia, especially in relation to the study of ‘race’ and ethnicity.¹¹ For a long time sport had been considered trivial and devoid of the social and political issues which concerned ‘serious’ scholars. In response, the general aim of the thesis is to redress this balance. By providing a historical and sociological case study of East Midlands-based, African-Caribbean founded football club, Meadebrook Cavaliers c.1970 – 2010, the thesis aims to demonstrate the usefulness of analysing sport and leisure for the wider study of BAME communities in Britain. It also aims to demonstrate that sport is inextricably connected to wider social and political issues.

The following extract, taken from an article published in the Jamaican Community Service Group Newspaper in 1974, highlights the fact that the African-Caribbean experience in Leicester, from the end of World War Two through to the 1970s, was also defined by a marginalisation in leisure.

[I]n Leicester this Christmas it is a very real problem for thousands of West Indians and others who want to really let themselves go and celebrate. Quite simply, there is nowhere big enough, cheap enough and lively enough to go... Most West Indians like to celebrate Christmas with the big dance where they can enjoy their own music, food and drink, among their own people. But Leicester has no place which can provide these facilities... They need a place where they can enjoy themselves in their own way... the only practical course is for West Indians to have their own community centre, a place where they can entertain, not only themselves but non-West Indians too.¹²

Importantly, the extract suggests that leisure activities were socially and culturally important pastimes for many within Leicester’s Caribbean community. Furthermore, it also indicates that the how, where, and in what ways Leicester’s Caribbean community ‘did leisure’, was also bound up with their wider identity politics. It was deeply embedded within perceptions of black space, belonging, body-management and culture. Leisure was also a way for people to express and maintain their Caribbean-heritage.

¹¹ Jeremy MacClancy, ‘Sport, Identity and Ethnicity’ in Jeremy MacClancy, eds., *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity* (Oxford, 1996)

¹² ‘Annex D: ‘No Room in the Inn...’ Select Committee on Race Relations & Immigration, *Session 1975-76, The West Indian Community: Minutes of evidence; Thursday, 4th December, 1975, Leicester United Caribbean Association, West Indian Organisation Co-ordinate Committee*

Lastly, this leisure event also appeared implicitly to serve a cultural-cohesion (or ‘race relations’) function.

Within the city of Leicester today – a city which is often held up as a model of multiculturalism¹³ - community led leisure activities which provide a cultural-heritage and/or cohesive function, are not only common, but they are morally encouraged and financially endorsed by local government (see *Chapter 8*). They include Leicester’s annual African-Caribbean Carnival and numerous other locally-staged ‘cultural’ events. Against these kinds of developments, Nash et al argue that the history of leisure ‘perhaps more than most areas, reflects the changes that the twentieth century has brought to Leicester’.¹⁴ This observation is apt, inviting an account of leisure in Leicester which includes: an analysis of which groups and persons could and could not access leisure *and* sport; what were the reasons for the exclusion of certain groups; and how have these exclusions remained or changed.

Despite this observation, little attention is given in Nash et al’s history of *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* to the city’s substantial local league football network which, at an estimate, contains over 200 Saturday-teams. Nor is any substantial attention given to Leicester’s small, but socially significant, cohort of BAME founded – or connected - sports clubs and football teams, which emerged during the second half of this century. This included Sapna FC, Highfield Rangers FC, Overseas Cricket Club and Leicester Nirvana (now Thurnby Nirvana). These, like other BAME clubs which emerged in England during the same period, such as Caribbean Cricket Club (Leeds), Albion FC (Bradford), Coventry Sporting, West Indian Wanderers (Coventry) and the Reading West Indians RFC (Reading) were important leisure and sociability spaces for the BAME communities which they served (see Figure 1.1).

To their players, these were often much more than mere sports teams. Consequently, these minority ethnic clubs provide useful ways for scholars to gain a more holistic insight into the immigration experience in Britain. However, beyond an academic consensus which holds that these BAME clubs were formed in response to a largely

¹³ Gurparal Singh, ‘Multiculturalism in Contemporary Britain: Reflections on the “Leicester Model”’ *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (5) 1 (2003) pp.40-55

¹⁴ David Nash et al, ‘Leisure and Consumption’ in David Nash and David Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Gloucestershire, 1993) p194

black-resistant sporting landscape in Britain, little is known about the specific origins of these black sporting spaces; their contribution to the British amateur sporting landscape; and their continuing role in their members' wider social histories. Put another way, I want to demonstrate what the history of these black founded football clubs can tell us about local sport and the city of Leicester; and what black involvement within local football over the last four decades can tell us about the changing identity politics, border-work and realities of Leicester's African-Caribbean community.

In a more general sense, it is these questions that frame this thesis, which maps the physical and social history of a Leicester based and African-Caribbean founded football club from its founding to close to the present day (1970 – 2010). Similar to Dee's study of sporting Jewry in Britain, it is hoped that this case study of a 'black' founded football club will 'help in the development of a much clearer, more vivid and more comprehensive history' of Britain's African-Caribbean-heritage community.¹⁵

In addition there has been a relative lack of academic attention paid to the physical development of local football clubs in Britain. With the exception of a few, such as Porter's chapter on the Pegasus Football Club,¹⁶ the modest interest in this area has largely been focused on mapping the histories of either a few, or all, of England's ninety-two *professional* clubs (and the professional – or 'association' - game more widely).¹⁷

Investigations into what we might describe as the social history of football clubs (connections between sport and social/community identity), have also focused primarily on the relationship between *professional* clubs and their supporters/local communities. Sudgen and Tomlinson, for example, have observed how an attachment to football - perhaps more than to other cultural activities – enables some men to express a wider

¹⁵ David Dee, *Jews and British Sport: Integration, Ethnicity and Anti-Semitism, c1880-c1960* (PhD Thesis, De Montfort University, 2011) p10

¹⁶ Dilwyn Porter, 'Amateur Football in England, 1984-1963: The Pegasus Phenomenon' *Contemporary British History* (14) 2 (2000) pp.1-30

¹⁷ Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863 -1915* (Sussex, 1980) p10; Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow, 2008); John Williams, "'Dark Town' and 'A Game for Britishers': Some Notes on History, Football and 'Race' in Liverpool in Daniel Burdsey, eds., *Race, Ethnicity and Football: Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues* (London, 2011);

subscription to particular sets of imagined identities – especially class-based identities.¹⁸ Work on fan-culture and football hooliganism in Britain during the late 1980s, for example, illuminated the presence of a powerful discourse which connected a “laddish” drinking, violent, heterosexual and (predominantly) white working class culture and identity to English football.¹⁹ Both Taylor and Mason trace this ‘class-connection’ to the turn of the twentieth century;²⁰ where – according to Mason – watching and playing association football became something ‘which working men did’.²¹ He notes that it also served as a way for them to define and ‘locate themselves’.²²

Parker argues that this type of working class sub-culture was not only enforced and adhered to by the spectators of professional football, but also by the men *within* it. In his ethnographic study of youth trainees at a professional football club during the early 1990s, Parker describes some of the ways in which the young professionals he observed adhered to informal ‘norms’ and expectations placed on them by established professionals and coaches.²³ What he connotes as ‘heterosexual hegemon[ic]’ practices, coalesced around specific patterns of consumption and displays of ‘hyper-masculinity’.²⁴ A similar process within football was recently described by Cashmore and Cleland as a ‘hetero-normative culture’.²⁵ Arguably, neither term quite stresses the significance of the working class element which underpinned the social construction of those who were – or who were not – considered to be football men during this period. As the following extract from ex-England footballer, Graeme Le Saux’s autobiography demonstrates:

¹⁸ John Sudgen and Alan Tomlinson, ‘Sport, Politics and Identities: Football Cultures in Comparative Perspective’ in Maurice Roche, eds., *Sport, Popular Culture and Identity* (1998) p171

¹⁹ Les Back, Tim Crabbe and John Solomos observed that there was a small but noticeable black presence within certain hooligan groups. See “‘Lions and Black Skins’: Race, Nation and Local Patriotism in Football’ in Carrington and McDonald, eds., *‘Race’, Sport and British Society* (London, 2001)

²⁰ Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football*; Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863 -1915*

²¹ Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863 -1915* p222

²² Ibid.

²³ Andrew Parker, *Chasing The ‘Big-Time’: Football Apprenticeship in the 1990s* (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 1996)

²⁴ Andrew Parker, ‘Soccer, Servitude and Sub-cultural Identity: Football Traineeship and Masculine Construction’ *Soccer and Society* (2) 1 (2001) pp.59-80

²⁵ Ellis Cashmore and Jamie Cleland, ‘Glasswing Butterflies: Gay Professional Football Players and Their Culture’ *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (35) 4 (2011) pp.420-436

For much of my career, reading *The Guardian* was used as one of the most powerful symbols of how I was supposed to be weirdly different... and the rumours that I was gay stemmed from not fitting in... The way I dressed, the music I listened to, the fact that I went to art galleries...²⁶

From this body of work we can glean how professional football clubs were formed and what processes underpinned their origins and development. We can also glean ‘how’, ‘why’ and in what ways professional football clubs have (and possibly continue) to incubate and/or reflect specific hetero-normative and working class discourses.

By comparison, we know remarkably little with regards to the thousands of English football clubs which exist below the professional level – particularly those clubs which operate in local leagues. Paradoxically, this gap in knowledge exists despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of football clubs in Britain are non-professional (according the latest FA figures, currently there are ‘125,000 FA-affiliated teams playing in over 1,700 leagues’ across England);²⁷ and despite a consensus among many sports-interested scholars that local voluntary clubs are deeply embedded within the everyday politics of masculinity, community and identity.²⁸

What do we know currently about BME football clubs in Britain? Relatively little is the answer. There has been, however, some interest among sociologists and historians in the wider area of sport and immigrant communities in Britain. This has included explorations which have demonstrated the ways in which British sport has been a significant platform for the integration, assimilation and exclusion of immigrant groups in Britain; such as the Jewish, Irish, Asian and African-Caribbean communities.²⁹

²⁶ cited in Martin Samuel, ‘How gay slurs almost wrecked my career’ *The Times* September 10, 2007

²⁷ www.thefa.com/TheFA/WhatWeDo (accessed on: 21.9.2012)

²⁸ John Williams, ‘“Cavaliers is a Black Club”: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game without Frontiers: Football, identity and modernity* (Aldershot, 1994)

²⁹ See Dee, *Jews and British Sport: Integration, Ethnicity and Anti-Semitism, c1880-c1960*; Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin, 1999); Joseph M Bradley, ‘Celtic Football Club, Irish Ethnicity, and Scottish Society’ *New Hibernia Review* (12) 1 (2008) pp.96-110; Sanjiev Johal, *The Sport of Lions: The Punjabi-Sikhs in Britain* (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2002); and Martin Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society Since 1945* (London, 1998) Chapter 6: ‘Sport and Ethnicity’

There are no British professional football clubs which can be traced directly to one of Britain's visibly non-white communities. This is unlike in Sweden and Australia, who have professional football clubs which derive from each country's established Assyrian and Greek communities respectively.³⁰ Britain does, however, possess numerous BAME founded football clubs which operate at various voluntary and semi-professional levels of the game. These include clubs such as, Sporting Bengal and London Tigers. England also possesses established Chinese and South Asian football leagues. The apparent determination among scholars in Britain to focus on the professional game (highlighted above), may go a small way to explaining why there exists a *substantial* gap in knowledge of non-white football clubs in England.

This is not to suggest that the social roles of some 'black' sports clubs have gone completely unnoticed by academics interested in the wider field of race and ethnic studies. MacClancey notes that the prism of sport is infrequently engaged with by mainstream sociologists.³¹ Subsequently, reference to 'black' sports clubs is usually a small part of larger discussions around social spaces which provide some form of cultural maintenance or community solidarity function. In his chapter on the experience of early African-Caribbean settlers in Northampton, for example, Watley argued that: '[I]solation and alienation led Afro-Caribbeans in Britain to form organisations to create solidarity... Leading this trend were black churches, supplementary schools, social and sports clubs'.³²

In a similar fashion to the main body of history and sociology, the few scholarly investigations explicitly concerned with the slightly wider area of BME-connected *sports* clubs in Britain, have also tended to focus on the social, cultural and resistance functions of these spaces (also see *Chapter 7*).³³ This body of work, however, tells us little with regards to: a) what types of imagined and 'black' identities these spaces

³⁰ Torbjorn Anderson, 'Immigrant teams in Sweden and the case of Assyrisk FF' *Soccer & Society* (10) 3-4 (2009) pp.398-417

³¹ MacClancey, 'Sport, Identity and Ethnicity'

³² George Watley, 'The Cultural Currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c.1960-1990' *Midland History* (36) 2 (2011) pp.245-261 p249

³³ Sallie Westwood, 'Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space' in Jeff Hearn and David Morgan, eds., *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory* (London, 1990); Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England"; Ben Carrington, 'Sport, Masculinity, and Black Cultural Resistance' *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, (22) 3 (1998) pp.275-298

reflect and embody; and b) the physical development of these spaces. Within this thesis I intend to demonstrate how these two themes are intimately connected and thus, should not be explored in isolation. Furthermore, I argue that only by analysing spaces in this way (from a combined historical and sociological perspective), can we achieve a more holistic and rounded picture of the black-British experience in sport; one which accounts for both time-based and social developments (see *Chapter 2*).

Research concerned with race, ethnicity and sport, has also tended to focus on the experience of black individuals more than it has on the sporting spaces which they create. In turn, much of the existing literature on black sportsmen is written in relation to their experiences within largely white sporting spaces.

Carrington attempts to connect the black experience in sport, particularly in an American context, to (what has since been redefined as) a pseudo-science, which emerged during the nineteenth century.³⁴ He argues that ‘white’ perceptions of the black body as one which was hyper-physical but adversely ‘compensated’ by limited intellect, stamina and in turn character, moved from an abstract fantasy to a ‘self-sustaining theory’ during this period.³⁵ That modern sport became an arena which ‘help[ed] to make race make sense’.³⁶ Put simply, sport as a spectacle, (pseudo) science and discourse became a key component within the construction of the black athlete as one which was ‘disconnected from forms of intelligence and decision making, and [could] only operate through the use of natural speed and physical strength.’³⁷

Wiggins’ history of scientific explanations for black sporting performance by mainly American ‘coaches, athletes, trainers, cultural anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, physical educators, biologists, medical doctors, and sports-casters’ during

³⁴ See Ben Carrington, *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora* (London, 2010) also see, Brett St Louis, ‘Sport, Genetics and the ‘Natural Athlete’: The Resurgence of Racial Science’ *Body & Society* (9) 2 (2003) pp.75–95; p35; ‘Sport and Commonsense Racial Science’ *Leisure Studies* (23) 1 (2004) pp.31-46; ‘Brilliant Bodies, Fragile Minds: Race, Sport and Mind/Body Split’ in Claire Alexander and Caroline Knowles, eds., *Making Race Matter: Bodies, Space & Identity* (Hampshire, 2005)

³⁵ Carrington, *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora* p67

³⁶ Ibid. p66 also see John Hobberman, *Darwin’s Athletes: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (New York, 1997)

³⁷ Colin King, ‘Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game Inside Football’ *Leisure Studies* (23) 1 (2004) pp.19-30 p20

the second half of the twentieth century, provides some useful examples of the interplay between science and sport (or sports science) in the construction of the black sportsman.³⁸ Despite widespread rejection of this thesis, Fleming points out that the idea of black sportsmen as inherently hyper-physical but lacking in cognitive ability also became fixed within the minds of many sports coaches operating in post-World War Two Britain.³⁹ Cashmore found that white football coaches operating in professional football during the 1970s and 1980s would openly describe black players in this way. The much-travelled manager, Jim Smith, for example, argued that: ‘They [black players] seem to ...use very little intelligence; they get by on sheer natural talent...’⁴⁰ Similarly, ex-Crystal Palace Chairman, Ron Noades claimed that in ‘multi-racial’ teams, white players ‘balance things up and give the team some brains’, while the black players provide ‘a lot of skill and flair’.⁴¹

Burdsey notes that, ironically, it was these kinds of crude perceptions of black sportsmen which helped to facilitate initial black access into English football during the latter half of the twentieth century.⁴² By the same token, such ideas also impacted negatively on their experience within the professional game - in obvious and nuanced ways. Maguire, for example, observed that these kinds of perceptions of black sportsmen led to the majority of black professional footballers being assigned – or ‘stacked’ into – certain on-pitch positions, such as forward or wide-midfield.⁴³ Polley notes that these were positions which many white coaches believed required ‘speed but little intelligence’.⁴⁴

³⁸ David K Wiggins, “‘Great Speed But Little Stamina:’ The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority’ *Journal of Sport History* (16) 2 (1989) pp.158-185 p158

³⁹ Scott Fleming, ‘Racial Science and South Asian and black Physicality’, Carrington and McDonald, eds., *‘Race’, Sport and British Society*

⁴⁰ cited in Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen* p45

⁴¹ cited in Jim White, ‘Of course he is not a Nazi. He is a man who likes history’ *The Guardian* January 1, 2003

⁴² Burdsey also asserts that unlike the perceived to be hyper-masculine black sportsmen, South Asian-heritage sportsmen found that they were unable to access professional football. This was largely due to them being perceived as physically inferior to white sportsmen, and viewed as culturally incompatible with contact sport. See Daniel Burdsey, ‘No Ball Games Allowed? A Socio-Historical Examination of the Development and Social Significance of British Asian Football Clubs’ *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (32) 3 (2006) pp.477-496

⁴³ Joseph A Maguire, ‘Race and Position Assignment in English Soccer: A Preliminary Analysis of Ethnicity and Sport in Britain’ *Sociology of Sport Journal* (5) 3 (1988) pp.257-269

⁴⁴ Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society Since 1945* p154

Existing literature on the black experience in British sport, alongside popular media accounts, has also demonstrated the ways in which professional football, for much of the last century, was a hostile space for early black professional footballers.⁴⁵ During this period, black professionals had frequently to endure racism from spectators.⁴⁶ Typically, abuse of this kind took the form of monkey chants, name calling and the throwing of bananas.

Authors such as Holland, argue that this treatment of black players can be read as an attempt by certain white supporters to protect what they perceived to be ‘their’ working class territories – and perhaps the nation more widely - from ‘outsiders’. As Back et al point out: ‘[D]uring the seventies and eighties England fans would regularly sing ‘There ain’t no black in the Union Jack, send the bastards back!’⁴⁷ By the same token, this rejection also served as a way of maintaining their club’s – and English football’s - ability to reflect and embody a particular rendition of white working classness.⁴⁸ Polley notes that strong desires to keep football ‘white’ resulted in the occasional use of death threats to deter black players from playing for a particular club/national team; and from encroaching on key locations within the white cultural imagination.⁴⁹ Prior to making his full England debut in 1982, for example, black footballer, Cyrille Regis, received a bullet in the post accompanied by a letter which read: ‘You’ll get one of these through your knees if you step on our Wembley turf.’⁵⁰

Black players also had to endure racial abuse from fellow professionals. This included ‘racial sledging’ from opposing players and black ‘jokes’ from their teammates and managers. Ismond argues that within professional football, these practices were often viewed as a normal part of the game. Black players who reacted to racial provocation from opposing players were seen as over-sensitive. Ismond examples this last point by drawing on Manchester United Manager, Sir Alex Ferguson’s, refusal to accept racial

⁴⁵ Phil Vasili, *The First Black Footballer: Author Wharton 1865-1930* (London, 1998)

⁴⁶ Brian L Holland, ‘Surviving Leisure Time Racism: The Burden of Racial Harassment on Britain’s Black Footballers’ *Leisure Studies* (16) 4 (1997) pp.261-277

⁴⁷ Les Back, Tim Crabbe and John Solomos, *‘Lions, Black Skins and Reggae Gyals’: Race, Nation and Identity in Football* (London, 1998) <http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/back.pdf> p12

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Also see Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen* and Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* Chapter 6: ‘Sport and Ethnicity’

⁵⁰ Chris Green, ‘Leaders of the New School’ *The Observer: Observer Sport Monthly* (September 7, 2003)

provocation as a valid reason for his midfielder, Paul Ince's reaction to an opposing player (and subsequent sending off): 'Why do you [Paul Ince] get upset with that?... Plenty of English people down here call me Scottish bastard.'⁵¹

King argues that the kinds of cultural expectations, rituals and norms found within professional football clubs during this period, derived from a distinctly working class and *white* interpretation of normality.⁵² He surmises that to survive within the professional football environment, black players had to exhibit a *racialised* performance; one which 'adopt[s] the white man's standards of behaviour'.⁵³ Alternatively, black players could conduct themselves in a particularly docile or subservient way; by accepting things such as, racial insults as harmless changing room banter.⁵⁴ He observes that failure to do so typically resulted in the black player being labelled an 'uppity nigger' by his peers and by managers - or labelled a player who has a 'chip' on his shoulder.⁵⁵ Inevitably, such 'deviant' players often ended up being excluded from the club - and possibly excluded from the game more widely.⁵⁶

What, then, is the black experience in football in twenty-first century Britain? Many sport historians, sociologists and journalists would agree that with regards to the inclusion of African-Caribbean heritage players, professional football and particularly, the national team, today, are significantly more inclusive and diverse spaces than they were even 15 years ago (this is not, however, to be misinterpreted as evidence for the

⁵¹ Patrick Ismond, *Black and Asian Athletes in British Sport and Society: A Sporting Chance?* (London, 2003) p17

⁵² Colin King, 'Play the White Man' www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/pdf/king.pdf (2000)

This point is neatly demonstrated in the work of Long and Hylton, who found that when presented with the open question: 'How would you describe your ethnic background?' many white local football club secretaries self-identified as having 'none' or described their 'white' ethnicity as 'normal'. See Jonathan Long and Kevin Hylton, 'Shades of White: An Examination of Whiteness in Sport' *Leisure Studies* (21) 2 (2002) pp.87-103 p91-93

⁵³ King 'Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game Inside Football' p23

⁵⁴ Also see Dominic Malcolm, 'Stacking in Cricket: A Figurational Sociological Reappraisal of Centrality' *Sociology of Sport Journal* (14) 3 (1997) pp.263-282; Jas Bains and Sanjiev Johal, *Corner Flags and Corner Shops* (London, 1998)

⁵⁵ King, 'Play The White Man' p3

⁵⁶ Dave Hill's discussion on the experience of black Liverpool FC player, Howard Gayle, provides a useful example in this regard. See Dave Hill, 'From Barnes to Camara: Football, Identity and Racism in Liverpool' in John Williams, Stephen Hopkins and Cathy Long, eds., *Passing Rhythms: Liverpool FC and the Transformation of Football* (Oxford, 2001)

eradication of racism from the professional game).⁵⁷ The literature explored thus far, has demonstrated some of the ways in which the predominantly ‘white’ landscape of professional football for much of the last century, embodied and ‘played back’ very specific white and working class discourses. Against this, England’s now visibly cosmopolitan Premier League and its increasingly multi-racial flagship national team, prompts us to ask important – albeit obvious – questions, such as: what social, political and racialised discourses does football ‘reflect’ and/or embody today? Christian argues, cautiously, that the almost ‘palpable’ presence of black and dual-heritage players within the modern game in many ways reflects a Britain that is more at ease with ‘multiculturalism’ and more accepting of dual-heritage people.⁵⁸ Perhaps more than anything else, the stark contrast between the ‘old’ and white discourses of football in the late 1970s and 1980s, and the ‘new’ multicultural/racial discourses which coalesce around professional football today, provide a potent reminder of the fact that social identities and their incubators are things which are always in the making.⁵⁹

Given the lack of investigations into ‘black run’ football clubs, we remain unable to substantiate empirically, how and in what ways the observations discussed here are applicable to black football clubs – and/or to the experience of the black players/members/supporters which constitute them. Furthermore, we are unaware of the kinds of cultural norms, expectations and hegemonic practices which shape these black spaces (from both a sociological and historical perspective). In what ways do these norms reflect wider and imagined ideals of black identity? In what ways have the black masculinity discourses embodied and reflected within these black spaces changed? What factors/processes have influenced these changes? What tensions has change brought - particularly for men who feel that their identities are no longer ‘reflected back’ by the new discourses embedded within their local sports club? In response, the thesis aims to progress knowledge in all these areas.

⁵⁷ Les Back, Tim Carabbe and John Solomos, *The Changing Face of Football: Racism, Identity and Multiculture in the English Game* (Oxford, 2001)

⁵⁸ Mark Christian ‘Mixing up the game’ in Burdsey, eds., *Race, Ethnicity and Football: Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues* p131

⁵⁹ Stuart Hall, ‘Culture, Identity and Diaspora’ in Johnathan Rutherford, eds., *Identity, Community, Culture and Difference* (London, 1990)

Traditionally, the relationship between sport and British African-Caribbeans has been described as a platform which has enabled some members from this routinely ghettoised group a way of achieving often unparalleled levels of social mobility and greater ‘acceptance’ within mainstream society.⁶⁰ Using the example of dual-heritage, Formula 1 driver, Lewis Hamilton, Carrington stresses that the emergence and public embrace of a new generation of BME (heritage) ‘sports stars’, who possess complex identities and non-traditional class origins, require social scientists to employ new ways of talking about – and, in turn, conceptualising – the relationship between sport and today’s black-heritage athletes:

What is striking ...is that they do not speak to the traditional ways in which... black athletes have classically been framed. They come from sprawling suburbs... and not the inner cities... Theirs is not the immigrant story of the likes of football player John Barnes... their Englishness is simply an unremarkable, uncontestable [*sic*] given... they are establishing new paradigms for what it means to be British... There is, to put it simply, no script... for understanding how we are to read [their] political and symbolic significance... Hamilton [has]... been heralded as the new faces of multicultural England.⁶¹

Various authoritative voices in the field of race and ethnicity study in Britain, such as Martin Bulmer and John Solomos have recognised that blackness, in late-modern Britain, is increasingly fragmented by myriad social factors, which include gender and access to wealth.⁶² In what appears to be something of an embrace of this position, Carrington argues that viewing sport as a platform for Britain’s black communities to circumvent ghettoised social realities can no longer be applied in a blanket fashion. At its most rudimentary, his argument holds that as black identity becomes increasingly fractured, different black people are attaching different meanings to their sporting identities and using sport – in this case football – for new leisure and social purposes. I intend to move this thesis beyond theoretical supposition by presenting an empirically-substantiated account, which demonstrates some of the ways in which black-heritage

⁶⁰ Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen*; Williams, *Cricket and Race*; Collins, *Rugby League in Twentieth Century Britain: A Social and Cultural History*

⁶¹ Carrington, *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora* (London, 2010) p158-159

⁶² Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, ‘Introduction’ in Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, eds., *Researching Race and Racism* (London, 2004)

people from diverging social and classed realities are using sport differently to each other (and to previous generations).

From the literature explored, it is apparent that existing knowledge on the physical development of grass-roots football clubs in Britain - particularly those which are rooted within, or founded by British-African-Caribbean communities - and knowledge on the relationship between local football and constructions of local African-Caribbean social/masculine identities, are two under-researched areas within the history and sociology of sport. The literature lacks, for example, answers to routine questions around the development of local BME football clubs in Britain. These questions include: what are the origins of these spaces? In what sorts of contexts do park-based black football *teams* evolve into established football *clubs* with private facilities? What effect does seeking or achieving sporting success have on a club's ability to remain rooted within, or reflective of, the local communities within which they are originally couched? How and in what ways is the development of local black football clubs influenced by the wider social and economic developments at the local or national levels? By providing a grounded historical and sociological case study which charts the social and physical history of one Leicester based African-Caribbean founded football club, I intend to go a small way to redressing this paucity here.

The thesis also engages with the more complex issue of the relationship between the changing parameters - or identity politics - of British African-Caribbeans and local football. We can describe the existing literature in this area in two ways: firstly, it is focused primarily on the relationship between the changing realities, and in turn, identities of black men and *professional* football;⁶³ secondly, discontinuities between the sporting experiences and identities of black sportsmen are more-often-than-not, explored from an *inter-generational* perspective. As indicated above, existing literature demonstrates that early (first and second-generation) black-British sportsmen were often perceived by the game's gatekeepers and supporters as an alien - and unwanted - presence. It also highlights how, set against a once routine ghettoization in work and

⁶³ Williams' exploration of a local black football club in Leicester and Jones' account of the experiences of black footballers within non-league football are two notable exceptions. See Williams, '“Cavaliers is a Black Club”: Race, Identity and Local Football in England' and Robyn L. Jones, 'The Black Experience within English Semiprofessional Soccer' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (26) 1 (2002) pp.47-65 p55

housing, football (alongside sports such as, boxing, athletics and Rugby League) provided a rare opportunity to achieve some social mobility, and to construct an alternative and positive identity.⁶⁴ Recent work on the current generation of black-heritage (professional) sportsmen indicates that they are – according to Carrington – increasingly considered to be English.⁶⁵ Likewise, many no longer come from economic and inner-urban ghettos, so they use sport in different ways.

This thesis attempts to progress understanding of the relationship between intergenerational difference and sport in two novel ways. (1) It explores this relationship using the prism of *local* football. (2) It sketches out the different ways that black people from different generations use *non-professional* football (and the different meanings they ascribe to it) – and explores what this can tell us about the ways in which young black men use and have used local football to locate and distinguish themselves from other generations of black men.

This ‘inter-generational’ way of analysing – and in turn framing – differences between people, particularly those from the same ethno-racialised community, can also obscure as much as it reveals. It can, for example, give a false impression that social identities in modernity are fixed and only change/differ with the arrival of a new generation.⁶⁶ There exists a wider academic consensus which holds that social identities are reflexive ‘things’ which are constantly made and remade.⁶⁷ Despite this, few works have attempted to engage with the ways in which the ‘black’ social identities of one generation can change, fracture and or/homogenise – and even fewer have attempted to engage with this issue through the medium of non-professional football.

By charting the social histories of a group of second-generation men attached to the Meadebrook Cavaliers club from inception to now (1970-2010), this thesis offers an account of their shifting sporting – and wider – social identities. It is anticipated that the history of this local football club will highlight further the fluidity and heterogeneity of

⁶⁴ Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen*; Alan Tomlinson, ‘Domination, Negotiation, and Resistance in Sports Cultures’ *Sport and Social Issues* (22) 3 (1998) pp.235-240

⁶⁵ Carrington, *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora*

⁶⁶ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London, 1993)

⁶⁷ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, 1991)

‘black identity’. It will also shed light on some of the ways in which modern British-black identities are characterised by both intra and inter-generational discontinuities.

In order to achieve these aims, the following two research objectives have been constructed. The thesis will provide: an account which details the historical and social development of the Meadebrook Cavaliers football club c.1970-2010; and an account of the shifting notions of blackness among Cavaliers’ cohort of second-generation African-Caribbean founders and volunteers. To achieve these outlined objectives, the thesis is sub-divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 2 provides the methodological context for the thesis. It discusses the reasons, advantages and challenges for employing a multidisciplinary approach to achieve the thesis’ objectives. This is followed by a critical discussion on the methods of history and ethnography in relation to the empirical-based study of ‘race’ and ethnicity. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the advantages, disadvantages and challenges to the production of a critical social history, which accompanied me (as a ‘black’ researcher) entering the ‘black’ social world of my ‘black’ participants.

Chapter 3 is a historical overview of processes of immigration in Britain and Leicester c.1900-1968. It describes the wider patterns of immigration in Britain and locates the episode of post-World War Two immigration from the Caribbean within this wider context. It also describes the social and intra-racial divisions which characterised the early settlers from the Caribbean. Attention is then given to the ways in which the black experience in Leicester was both typical and atypical of the wider black experience in Britain. The chapter concludes by sketching out how and why the racial climate in the city became increasingly hostile, especially during the 1960s. This was the period when the second-generation of African-Caribbeans began to emerge in the city.

Chapter 4 details the origins of the Cavaliers club. It pays particular attention to what the decision to play football and in turn, to create Meadebrook Cavaliers, tells us about the wider identity politics of this particular group of second-generation black youth in Leicester, especially during the period 1960-1979. It also addresses how, and in what ways, Leicester’s racially hostile sporting terrain influenced the Cavaliers teams’ sporting success and performances, in ways beyond motivation or resistance. It

concludes by examining the ways in which local football and the dynamics of the Cavaliers space helped to displace older social divisions, which shaped the consciousness of early black immigrant workers in the city. By the same token, it explores the ways in which their shared experiences *for Cavaliers* helped to foster a new and more unified African-Caribbean identity within the consciousness' of this particular group of young black sportsmen.

Focused largely on the period between 1980 and 2000, *Chapter 5* sketches out how the Cavaliers club developed from a parks-based team into an organisation which could boast its own 11-acre-ground, private facilities, floodlights and, allegedly, a paid senior men's football team. The chapter begins by discussing how social policies designed to re-enfranchise urban black youth in the early 1980s enabled Cavaliers to acquire its own ground and enter higher levels of sporting competition. By the same token, attention is paid to how these policies provided sections of the black community with new employment opportunities, and in turn, underpinned the emergence of new socio-economic divisions within the group of second-generation black men who largely occupied the club. The chapter concludes by highlighting how the Cavaliers club's decision to become a player-paying local football club in the 1990s reflected significant developments in local football and in the local black community. The chapter argues that the central focus of Cavaliers as a hub of black sporting unity, success and progressiveness, was being challenged by these new developments and emergent themes.

Using the club's decision to become a registered charity in 2009 as its starting point, *Chapter 6* seeks to address the following questions: In what ways has the post-2008 economic climate impacted on grass-roots football clubs? How – and in what ways – have these employed strategies affected the original purposes and objectives of these sporting spaces, at both the management and sporting levels? Initially, the chapter describes some of the ways in which the transformation into a registered charity forced the Cavaliers club to distance itself, formally, from its original football-centred objectives. It then explores how some of the new financial pressures brought about by gaining charity status have also impacted on the business of running men's senior football at the Cavaliers club. Attention is paid in particular to the club's inability to

continue to house deviant, and often black, youth within the organisation. The chapter concludes by examining how these new financial pressures which have in part forced the club to release a number of local and black players, alongside wider processes such as, 'black flight' from the local area, are impacting on the cultural and racial identity of this previously unmistakable black club.

Chapter 7 focuses on the changing 'resistance needs' expressed by a number of second-generation members of the Cavaliers club, to demonstrate the shifting ways that local football can be used to articulate a community's different identities, needs and resistances during differing socio-political contexts. The chapter highlights how the resistance functions attached to the organisation have continuously changed over the last four decades and subsequently, how they need to be contextualised within the city's wider social, sporting, employment and physical landscapes. The chapter concludes by arguing that wider social divergences, alongside new levels of class mobility, has had a significant influence on what local football now means for a number of local black sportsmen of this generation.

Chapter 8 provides an overview of the Cavaliers club's developing role as a community space and a space which provides other forms of leisure c.1982-2010. It begins by revisiting the black British experience in the East Midlands during the 1980s in an attempt to identify some of the factors which underpinned Cavaliers' initial decision to appropriate other forms of leisure and, in turn, to develop a community arm of the club. Next, it explores the increasing centrality of the Cavaliers organisation as a diverse leisure - and inter-cultural - hub in terms of local representations of its public identity over the last decade. This is done primarily through the lens of the city's local newspaper. It asks why the club's management committee also explicitly attempts to reinforce and convey these new identities. Lastly, against a backdrop of an increasing local government-funding emphasis on local and community run leisure spaces, which promote community cohesion, the chapter explores the effectiveness of Cavaliers' annual Fun-Day carnival in this regard. By drawing on data obtained from Cavaliers' own 2010 Fun-Day survey, the chapter concludes by arguing that this 'black' football club's carnival serves a number of possibly juxtaposed purposes: fund-raising, inter-community cohesion, and 'black' cultural maintenance.

The concluding chapter (*Chapter 9*) summarises the empirical findings and discusses the key themes of the thesis.

Before I commence, it is necessary to provide first a brief overview of the Cavaliers organisation during the period between 1970 and 2010. Meadebrook Cavaliers is undoubtedly the city's most successful BAME sports club, in terms of longevity, football honours and community (development) accolades.

The organisation formed in 1970 as an under-18s youth team. Matches were played on a local park some four miles outside of the Meadebrooks neighbourhood. The original team comprised of approximately twelve players, a chairman and a manager (who was a local and white school teacher). The team mainly consisted of local teenagers who were the children of Leicester's first-generation of African-Caribbean migrant workers. Most attended the neighbourhood's local school and local youth centre (the latter doubled as the club's training base). Cavaliers as a symbol of both (or either) 'race' and a specific urban-locality meant that the original Cavaliers team *also* included a small number of non-African-Caribbean heritage players who either lived in the locality or attended the local school or youth centre.⁶⁸

After two seasons the club moved into open aged football and created a second men's team a year later. The ability to now include local talent of all ages meant that in addition to housing men who shared friendship, locality and 'race' connections, Cavaliers' teams also housed a large number of brothers and cousins. Quite literally Cavaliers quickly became something of a club of families (This family element expanded during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Cavaliers' sport provision grew to include a women's netball and football team respectively. These teams contained a large number of players who were the daughters and/or sisters of existing male members).

In 1982 the Cavaliers club relocated to its present and private facilities, located in another neighbourhood some 5 miles outside of the Meadebrooks area. From this new base, the Cavaliers organisation's sporting provisions rapidly expanded and diversified. In addition to its flagship male senior teams and new cricket and darts provisions,

⁶⁸ See John Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* (Leicester, 1993)

Cavaliers also began to offer leisure and social provisions for local women and the wider black community. The organisation also launched a small scale community development project in this decade.

These progressive and ‘community’ orientated developments continued into the 1990s. Whereby the club launched a second, larger and government funded community project (the Meadebrooks Training Project). It also established a women’s football team and a number of boy’s youth teams. The club’s focus on youth increased in the new millennium, as the organisation expanded its youth section to include a Juniors (eleven-to-sixteen) and mini-soccer division (mixed-gender football teams which cater for children aged seven-to-ten).

Over the course of the last 40 years, Cavaliers’ membership has increased significantly. There are, however, a lack of reliable club records which demonstrate this particular expansion. One of the most reliable indicators of the increasing number of people formally associated with the club during this period is the number of different teams which the organisation housed during different decades throughout this forty-year-period. Table 1.1, for example, indicates that the number of club members who were associated with playing sport, alone, expanded from approximately 32 in the 1970s, to 194 by 2010.

Today the club approaches its eighteenth consecutive season in the city’s premier Senior League competition. It boasts a private eleven-acre-ground, floodlights, a multipurpose clubhouse, two senior teams, numerous youth, junior and mini-soccer teams and is currently something of a formally recognised space for community development. The club is also a registered charity. In spite of Cavaliers’ longevity and successes, the club’s distinctive feature is perhaps its committee, management and coaching membership. This consists predominantly of the same second-generation African-Caribbean men who have been attached to the club since its inception in 1970.

Figure 1.1: An early 'black' British sports team: The Reading West Indians RFC founded in 1975 (approximately) Source: *Caribbean Times* 3-9 January, 1986



The Reading Westindians
ing West Indians Rugby club came

**Table 1.1: Number of different sport provisions offered by Meadebrook Cavaliers
c.1970-2010**

| Period | Sport provisions (approximate number of members, including players and managers/coaches) | Total Number of members* |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Season 1970/72 – 79/80 | 2 Senior Men's Football teams (32) | 32 |
| Season 1980/81 – 89/90 | 3 Senior Men's Football teams (48) 1 Men's Darts team (6) 1 Men's Dominoes team (6) 1 Men's Cricket Team (14) 1 Women's Netball team (10) | 84 |
| Season 1990/91 – 99/2000 | 3 Senior Men's Football teams (48) 1 Men's Darts team (6) 1 Men's Dominoes team (6) 1 Men's Cricket Team (14) 1 Women's Netball team (10) 1 Senior Women's Football team (16) 2 Boy's Youth teams (32) | 132 |
| Season 2000/01 – 09/10 | 2 Senior Men's Football teams (32) 1 Men's Darts team (6) 1 Men's Dominoes team (6) 1 Men's Cricket Team (14) 6 Boy's Youth teams (96) 4 Mini-Soccer teams (40) | 194 |

*Approximate

Chapter 2

Methodology

Introduction

Crudely put, we might describe empirical-based social scientific research as being concerned with either testing or uncovering relationships between two or more variables. This is usually conducted in one of two ways: deductively (to begin with a supposition and use data to prove or disprove the original hypothesis; or inductively, when, instead, key theoretical themes emerge from an analysis of the data collected and collated.⁶⁹

Historical analysis is not directly concerned with these kinds of questions. Yow, for example, argues that, usually, history is concerned with more than exploring how things are.⁷⁰ It is also concerned with how they came to be that way.⁷¹ This is not to imply, however, that findings uncovered through historical enquiry are not of interest to those working in the social sciences - or vice versa.⁷²

As a project which attempts to combine aspects of both disciplines (history and sociology), this thesis is different to 'traditional' history and to 'traditional' sociology. It aims to be what Hadfield and Malcolm might describe as 'historical sociology'.⁷³ It is a case study which attempts to widen our sociological understanding of a particular group and their experiences through 'a commitment to understanding sport and society

⁶⁹ See Hilary Arksey and Peter Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists* (London, 1999); Matt Henn et al, *A Critical Introduction to Social Research* (2nd ed.) (London, 2006); Nicholas Walliman, *Social Research Methods* (London, 2007)

⁷⁰ Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (2nd ed.) (Oxford, 2005)

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² See Paul Thompson's, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 1988): Chapter 3 'The Achievement of Oral History'

⁷³ Louise Mansfield and Dominic Malcolm, 'Sociology' in S.W Pope and John Nauright, eds., *Routledge Companion to Sports History* (London, 2010)

through an historical approach.’⁷⁴ By the same token it attempts to present a historical narrative which is grounded in some social theory.⁷⁵

At its most rudimentary, the thesis attempts to present a *history* of shifting notions of identity, place and belonging at both the macro and micro level within a particular BME community, residing within a particular urban space. To achieve this history-framed objective, methodologically, the thesis – also rather unusually - draws heavily on data extrapolated through the use of ethnographic techniques *alongside* data sources more traditionally employed by historians.

Research which requires the researcher to gather and interpret data, as well as enter the social world of the research subjects, requires a discussion – a reflexive account – of why and what type of data were gathered; the ways in which data were gathered; and the ways in which data were interpreted. What follows is this ‘reflexive discussion’.

Employing data sources traditionally associated with history

Arguably, the overriding aim of the thesis is to provide a historical account which connects the physical and social transformations experienced by the Cavaliers club (and the local African-Caribbean community attached to it) to the wider political and sporting terrain during the period of focus. Henceforth, I will refer to this terrain as ‘the larger picture’.⁷⁶ To accomplish this aim, two objectives needed to be achieved: (1) the construction of a socio-historical ‘map’ which details adequately, this ‘larger picture’ c.1970-2010; (2) a detailed account of the lived and everyday experiences of the club and its membership throughout this period. An engagement with methods typically associated with history proved the most pragmatic response to achieving the first objective.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p102

⁷⁵ Despite recognition of the value of cross-fertilisation between the two disciplines, various voices highlight certain philosophical and theoretical tensions and challenges in the production of such work. See Mansfield and Malcolm, ‘Sociology’. Also see Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford, 1989) Appendix

⁷⁶ Tariq Modood, ‘Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptations in Britain: the Social context’ in Michael Rutter and Marta Tienda, eds., *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms* (Cambridge, 2005)

For the purpose of analytical simplicity, the ‘larger picture’ has been divided into four levels: the national; the regional; the community; and the club. To adequately sketch the four levels of analysis, the use of different data sets were required. When mapping the national picture, for example, I drew primarily on official records and archival data, published secondary sources, national newspapers, census material and national survey data.

What we might describe as the regional picture pre-2000, required an analysis of archival data obtained predominantly from the Leicester County Records Office. Data here included: council minutes; youth project initiatives and reports; reports on public/private youth action groups; and so on. The data set also included a detailed analysis of the city’s most widely read - and published - local newspaper,⁷⁷ the *Leicester Mercury* (access to every edition of the *Mercury* – dating back to pre-World War Two Leicester - was also accessible from the records office).

The construction of the local picture post-2000, drew heavily – but not exclusively - on council documentation, census data, and council publications obtained directly from the city council website (local government websites and online government publications proved to be an invaluable, cost-efficient and accessible source, which without, mapping the contemporary period would have proved extremely difficult).

Mapping the local African-Caribbean ‘community’ drew on similar data streams to those outlined above. These data, however, also consisted of primary and secondary oral history accounts.

Lastly, the construction of the club perspective was achieved through the use of data obtained via the Cavaliers club’s own archives. This data stream included minutes taken from various official club appointments. These included: management committee meetings; sub-management committee meetings; and Cavaliers’ Annual General Meetings. It also consisted of mission statements, photographs, match-day programmes, the club website, Football Association competition websites, a club Fun Day survey, flyers, and extracts from the local newspaper and scrap books (as well as extracts taken

⁷⁷ Lorna Chessum, ‘Race and Immigration in the Leicester Local Press 1945-62’ *Immigrants & Minorities* (17) 2 (1998) pp.36-56

from my fieldwork notes). The data stream included extracts and photographs taken from the national ‘black’ newspaper, *The Caribbean Times* (obtained from the National British Library). Lastly, the data set also contained primary and secondary oral accounts from various playing and non-playing members of the club.

Self-evidently the use of data gleaned from in-depth interviews – or ‘oral history’ – featured, especially when constructing the last two ‘levels’. This was because official and textual-based data sources often proved insufficient when mapping both the ‘social histories’ of Leicester’s black community and this local ‘black’ football club. Drawing heavily on official data, for example, to map the histories of Leicester’s African-Caribbean community, at times proved to be misleading. This was usually because of various factors. These included what we might describe as a common unwillingness by certain BAME groups to participate in formal government surveys and censuses; and a lack of sufficiently sensitive methods of data collection, which during certain periods conflated the separate island nationalities of the workers from the Caribbean with each other, and also with the South Asian and African Indian communities (in turn, these blanket categories frequently obscured as much as they informed).⁷⁸ Additionally, I found that the lack of official data on Leicester’s African-Caribbean community was further compounded by the fact that the majority of what little BAME data exists in the city’s records office is actually centred on Leicester’s larger and much more visible South Asian and African Indian heritage communities.

Thompson argues that, typically, the kinds of official and textual-based sources housed in local records offices are also, similarly unhelpful when attempting to construct the social histories of certain marginalised groups.⁷⁹ He argues that often, records offices only hold sources such as: ‘registers of births and marriages, minutes of councils [and] national and local newspapers’, but rarely documents such as, letters and diaries – the texts which usually contain the histories of ‘hidden communities’.⁸⁰ Caunce argues that the lack of official data on marginalised groups was often because (for long periods)

⁷⁸ Until the 1990s, for example, the term ‘black’ was often used as a reference for *all* non-white groups in the UK within popular and political discourse. See Nick Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’ in Pat Thane, eds., *Unequal Britain* (London, 2010)

⁷⁹ Paul Thompson, ‘The Voice of the Past: Oral History’ in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London, 2000)

⁸⁰ Ibid. p23

these groups were considered ‘unimportant’.⁸¹ Thus, they - like the African-Caribbean community with which this thesis is concerned - tend to only appear in official documentation, and in the local media, in extra-ordinary circumstances.⁸² Thompson elaborates that not only are these kinds of records biased and subjective, but, as political or politicized constructs, they only reflect one view of history.⁸³ This is often different – even in conflict – from the view of the marginalised individual or communities upon which they are reporting.

We can add to the list of groups or institutions missing from official sources, organisations and activities which are considered to be *private enterprises* – in this case local football clubs. While various County Football Associations, local newspapers and county record offices may hold information about the competitions local football teams entered, when they entered, and what competitions they won – or lost – information on the everyday affairs of private football clubs is seldom found outside of the club’s own archives. While Meadebrook Cavaliers undoubtedly produced such records for events such as, Annual General Meetings, they - like many other professional and local level football clubs - appear to place little value on preserving such records. Subsequently, Cavaliers have kept very little archival data which contains information on points of interest such as, annual membership figures, or comprehensive records with regards to the demographics of its membership.

Against these kinds of problems with official data sources and the gaps in club archives, the inclusion of orally sourced data was the most pragmatic solution. As explained by Perks and Thomson:

[T]he interviewing of eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical construction’ - has had a significant impact upon contemporary history.... The most distinctive contribution of oral history has been to include within the historical record ...groups of people who might otherwise have been ‘hidden from history’...⁸⁴

⁸¹ Stephen Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* (London, 1994) p8

⁸² Also see Les Back, “Home From Home’: Youth, Belonging and Place’ in Claire Alexander and Caroline Knowles, eds., *Making Race Matter: Bodies, Space and Identity* (London, 2005)

⁸³ Thompson, ‘The Voice of the Past: Oral History’

⁸⁴ Robert Perks and Alastair Thomson, ‘Introduction’ in Robert Perks and Alastair Thomson eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998) p ix

For these reasons, the oral data stream was crucial to achieve the thesis' first objective. While oral data has been criticised for its lack of validity, accuracy and reliability, Caunce argues that when it is triangulated with sources employed within more traditional historical exploration, the results are a: 'fuller picture than either could give alone'.⁸⁵

With regards to how it is extrapolated and its purpose, there appears to be few differences between what is referred to as oral history and data extrapolated via in-depth interviews. Yow highlights that both processes require the use of in-depth interviews and require the interviewer to inspire the topics, frame the questions and interpret the data.⁸⁶ With regards to what disciplines appropriate oral history data, Thompson argues that oral history has long been appropriated by sociologists and anthropologists.⁸⁷ Likewise, social historians frequently use qualitative and/or ethnographically gleaned oral accounts, extrapolated by sociologists and anthropologists. Given these kinds of methodological overlaps, scholars such as Yow, frequently use the terms 'oral history' and 'in-depth interview' interchangeably. She argues that *both* exist within the wider body of ethnographic methods.⁸⁸ Subsequently, in many ways the two terms appear to reference a very similar method of data collection and production.⁸⁹

It is necessary for reasons of analysis and clarity to create what might be described as an 'artificial' distinction between oral history and in-depth interviews here. My distinction relates to the context - and for what purposes - the data is employed. Henceforth, I will refer to my oral data set as *oral history* when it is employed within the construction of

⁸⁵ Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* p9 For a detailed discussion on the criticisms of oral history, see Paul Thompson's, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 1988) Chapter 2: 'Historians and Oral History'

⁸⁶ See Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (2nd ed.) Chapter 1: 'Introduction'

⁸⁷ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* Chapter 3: 'The Achievement of Oral History'

⁸⁸ Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (2nd ed.) p1

⁸⁹ This view, however, is not embraced by all sociologists or social historians. Dudley, for example, argues that there exists a clear distinction between ethnographic techniques such as, in-depth interviews and oral history. She argues that oral history accounts are less critically and ethically robust than data gleaned from ethnographers. See Katherine Marie Dudley, 'In the Archive, In the Field: What kind of document is an Oral History' in Mary Chamberlain and Paul Richard, eds., *Narrating and Genre: Contexts and Types of Communication* (New York, 2009) p161-162

the larger historical picture (the first objective). By the same token, I will refer to my oral data as *in-depth interviews* when it is used to uncover personal meanings and the everyday lived accounts of the individuals within the club (the second objective).

Clearly the use of a data set which, for-the-most-part, drew on official data sources, proved highly useful in enabling the researcher to achieve the first research objective (to construct and present an interpretation of the social and political terrain within which the 'everyday history' of the club takes place). This data set, however, proved less useful when attempting to achieve the second objective outlined (a detailed account of the lived and everyday experiences of the club and its membership during this period). Data sets of this type have been criticised for not being sufficiently sensitive to account for developments which take place at the micro-level - or developments taking place within the private sphere. Bourgois, for example, contends that academic enquiries which: 'rely on census Bureau statistics or Random sample neighbourhood surveys cannot access with any degree of certainty those that are often socially, cultural, economically marginalised.'⁹⁰ Courtney notes that many of the everyday issues which shaped the experiences of his (BAME) participants were 'invisible at the public level of demographic statistics.'⁹¹ Likewise, Alexander argues that while data streams which draw heavily on official sources can provide a useful overview, they often fail to provide 'any sense of their subjects as 'real people', in all their complexity of experience and attitudes.'⁹²

Gunaratharan draws attention to the problem of using this type of data specifically within work centred on 'race' and ethnicity. She argues that problems emerge because of the inability of quantitative methods to problematize 'race' and ethnicity as categories - and their failure to problematize the BAME respondent.⁹³ She elaborates that often, these methods assume that the respondents are passive. That racialised identities – and their significance - are not influenced by experiences, class, gender, time and space. That the

⁹⁰ Philippe Bourgois, 'Respect at work: 'Going legit'' in Stephanie Taylor, eds., *Ethnographic Research: A reader* (London, 2002) p16

⁹¹ Richard Courtney, *This is England: Class, Culture, and ethnicity across Non-Metropolitan Spaces* (PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2008) p62

⁹² Claire Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* (Oxford, 1996) p20

⁹³ Yasmin Gunaratnam, *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power* (London, 2003)

participants are willing to discuss both openly and honestly, issues which they may consider private or personal.⁹⁴ We might add to this list that often, such methods also assume that the participants are able to critically deconstruct their experiences – as well as deconstruct the complexities of their own ethnic identities.

This last point was noticeable during many of my interviews and conversations, particularly when my participants attempted to explain their own ‘black’ experiences. My participants would frequently mix-up and interchange ideas and terms such as race, ethnicity and culture – often within the same sentence. The accounts of their black experiences were often contradictory and at times ‘muddled’ in this sense. Gunaratnam emphasises that because these kinds of identity nuances and complexities often exist beyond the scope of traditional quantitative research tools, the methodological ‘validity’, ‘reliability’, and in turn, ‘authority’ associated with quantitative methods are subsequently, ‘undone by ‘race’’.⁹⁵

I have demonstrated the usefulness of data sets which predominantly consist of official and textual-based records in enabling us, as historians, to map ‘larger pictures’. I have also tried to demonstrate that as historians interested in ‘racialised’ and ethnic minority individuals and communities, we must also be mindful that they possess certain shortcomings, especially with regards to providing an insight into the lived and everyday experience. Put another way, the matter of ‘black’ identity politics is far too complex to be captured adequately by such methods. Thus, to explore (in sufficient detail) what Alexander describes as the ‘street level’ experience, and present a ‘clearer idea of the black British experience’ which takes place *within* this larger terrain (the second research objective),⁹⁶ an ethnographic approach was both a pragmatic and necessary course of action.

The theory behind ethnography: The ontological status of ‘race’

It is important to discuss first – and briefly – why employing ethnography was necessary from a theoretical perspective. Lusted has noted that the majority of early

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p72

⁹⁶ Ibid.

social research into 'race' and ethnicity was informed by a functionalist perspective (a perspective which embraces many of the principles associated with Positivist research).⁹⁷ Against this, it followed that early consensus around race and ethnicity work held that these kinds of identities were 'natural' and objective social categories.⁹⁸

Bulmer and Solomos point out that over the last four decades a new orthodoxy within 'race' and ethnicity study has emerged (henceforth I refer to this couplet, within the remainder of this chapter, as 'ethno-racial').⁹⁹ Influenced by the works of theorists such as, Hall, Gilroy and Modood, notions of 'ethno-racialised' identities as natural and/or objective social facts were widely criticised.¹⁰⁰ Subsequently, 'racialised' and ethnic identities – particularly within late-modern Britain – are increasingly acknowledged to be things which are continuously (re)constructed, fluid, multi-faceted and layered, negotiated, situational and reflexive.

Gunaratnam expands this point by arguing that critical enquiry into 'racialised' identities needs to 'dispense' with ontological and epistemological notions of 'race' and ethnicity as natural things, and as things which possess a singular 'truth'.¹⁰¹ She elaborates that by doing so, race-and-ethnicity work can begin to conceptualise and analyse adequately, modern BAME identities as things which are intersected by factors such as, generation, class, gender, time and space.¹⁰²

Notions of 'ethno-racialised' identities as situational were particularly useful when attempting to contextualise what were - at first glance - seemingly contradictory perceptions of self, articulated by many of my third-generation BAME, and by young white participants. A relatively straightforward example of this came when I asked

⁹⁷ Jim Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England* (PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2009): Chapter 4: 'Methodology'

⁹⁸ Also see John Solomos and Les Back, *Racism and Society* (Basingstoke, 1996)

⁹⁹ Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, 'Introduction' in Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, eds., *Researching Race and Racism* (London, 2004)

¹⁰⁰ Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities' in Les Back and John Solomos, eds., *Theories of Race and Racism* (London, 2000); Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London, 1993); *The Black Atlantic "Modernity and Double Consciousness"* (London, 1995); Tariq Modood, 'Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptations in Britain: the Social context' in Michael Rutter and Marta Tienda, eds., *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms* (Cambridge, 2005)

¹⁰¹ Gunaratnam, *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power* p77

¹⁰² Ibid. Chapter 3: 'Faking 'Race' or Making 'Race'?': 'Race'-of-Interviewer-Effects in Survey Research'

participants, Marcus (24, third-generation Black British: Caribbean), Riaz, (18, third generation Asian Indian: British) and Sean (21, white British) questions which coalesced around the ways in which their own - and others' – '(ethno)racialised' identities impacted on their every-day experiences and social interactions:

[T]o be honest it [race] don't really bother me. I don't really bother with those kinds of things. You know white, black. It's [about] ...people to be honest. (Marcus)

[I don't think Cavaliers being a BAME club] attracted me... I wasn't too fussed about it [race] to be honest. (Riaz)

I've grown up with [black friends] so it's never been a problem. Never has. Never will be!... I don't really take notice of it [race] because again, I just don't see things that way. (Sean)

All displayed palpable degrees of unease when asked about their general views on issues of 'race' and 'racial' differences. Each interviewee made it explicitly clear from the outset that they were convinced that their own 'racialised' identities – or the 'racialised' identities of others – had little impact on their everyday experiences and interactions. Moreover, 'race' was not perceived to be a meaningful part of their social identity make-up – or a meaningful part of who they thought they were.

However, when questions of racial difference were re-articulated through the medium of sport, conversely, the same participants then placed 'race' as a significant feature within their own and others' sporting identities – and in turn, argued that 'race' impacted significantly upon sporting performances:

There are different attributes from different kinds of players. [You] tend to find that a lot of black players are pretty quick and more athletic. And there is aggression! That is one thing I've noticed. (Marcus)

['Black' football] was a lot quicker! ...the way they move the ball around; and it was a lot more physical. Very, very physical! (Riaz)

I think that different players from different ethnicities... possess different attributes... I mean you take a look at athletics. When was the last Asian, white... whatever, to hold the 100 metre sprint record for the last how many years? You

have had your Usain Bolt's, Asafa Powell's, Maurice Greene's, and all these people hold world records, because they are... naturally fast... I'm a white player ... I am not the fastest. I am more of a long distance runner. (Sean)

For these participants, their 'racialised' identities - or the significance of the 'racialised' identities of others - become accentuated within certain situations and less important – or even absent – within others (situational). Within wider social spaces, for example, 'racialised' identities were considered to be void. Within sporting spaces, however, the same participants openly perceived 'race' as an objective and natural category, which polarised sports(wo)men of different phenotypes. Additionally, via 'race', certain natural laws and causal generalisations about black, white and Asian sportsmen were generated by some.

It is perhaps these kinds of contradictions which have contributed to the current academic consensus which rejects 'race' and ethnicity as phenomena which are natural, or as 'things' which exist independently of social perception. On this last point, Bulmer and Solomos offer a useful summary:

[Racialised and ethnic] identities are not something that already exists, transcending time and history... ethnic identities... have histories, and they undergo transformations... [they] are far from being fixed in some essentialist past.¹⁰³

They subsequently conclude that to gain a deeper and more critical comprehension of ethno-racial identities, the researcher's attention should instead centre on 'decipher(ing)' the meanings which these social constructs hold.¹⁰⁴

The ethnography

The best way to achieve the qualitative objectives of the thesis was to employ ethnographic techniques. Traditionally, ethnography draws heavily on semi-structured interviews. It is important to acknowledge, however, that what people recollect, as well

¹⁰³ Bulmer and Solomos, 'Introduction' p7

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

as what they claim to have seen and felt (and how they think they behaved) is not always an accurate depiction (although what, and how, people choose to remember their experiences – whether embroidered or down-played – can also be of interest to the study of identity).

Arksey and Knight suggest that one way to circumvent this issue is for the researcher to submerge themselves in the world of the participants – typically through the use of observations and/or the use of participation as observation.¹⁰⁵ In addition to observations, the researcher is encouraged to also study the texts, artefacts and symbolisms of the social world with which s/he is studying.¹⁰⁶ Against this, they conclude that the embrace of ethnographic research often enables the creation of what we might describe as a ‘narrow’ but ‘deep’ account of human ‘thought, feeling and action’.¹⁰⁷

Ethnographic (qualitative) methods, however, are not free from criticism. Hammersley points out that qualitative methodology is, at times, criticised for not being scientific enough.¹⁰⁸ He argues that: it is often accused of lacking ‘precision’;¹⁰⁹ Its scientific operationalization is often difficult to reproduce, and thus, it is open to accusations of low validity;¹¹⁰ It requires the researcher to abandon their objective position and consequently, draws heavily on subjective interpretations.¹¹¹

Hammersley also notes that others have argued that ethnography is *too* scientific – because it does not distance itself far enough away from quantitative methods.¹¹² Henn et al, argue that there also exists what we might describe as some methodological and theoretical middle-ground which lies between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This includes methodological triangulation (employing both methods where appropriate and pragmatic - as embraced within this research project) and critical

¹⁰⁵ Arksey and Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists*

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p15

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p5

¹⁰⁸ Martyn Hammersley, *Reading Ethnographic Research* (2nd ed.) (Harlow, 1998)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p10

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid. p11

realism, respectively.¹¹³ A sufficiently in-depth discussion into the latter, however, is beyond the scope of this discussion.¹¹⁴

Arksey and Knight draw attention to criticisms levelled particularly at early qualitative work from postmodernists, who argue that much of it - and also much quantitative work - often failed to acknowledge notions of meta-realities. Both instead: 'assume[d] that there was one reality to be investigated.'¹¹⁵ Against these types of theoretical shortcomings, Bulmer and Solomos draw attention to how - during the course of the last two decades - postmodern principles have become increasingly popular among 'race' and ethnicity interested scholars.¹¹⁶ Drawing on the work of Lyotard, for example, Malpas describes the postmodern period as one which is characterised by two driving forces: [A]n 'anything' goes consumer lifestyle where one can: '[E]at MacDonald's at midday and a local cuisine at night... wear Paris perfume in Tokyo ...and dress retro in Hong Kong';¹¹⁷ and a deregulation and dispersal of tradition and community - whereby both are instantly crushed and continuously remade.¹¹⁸ Within this conceptual-framework, post-modern identities are seen as things which are pluralised, fractured, multi-faceted and situational. It is not too difficult to see why the postmodern perception of identities is particularly amenable to those interested in race-and-ethnicity work.

Bulmer and Solomos note, however, that a significant number of 'race' and ethnicity interested scholars, who embrace a postmodern theoretical stance, have directed their focus on 'debate[s] about the conceptual status of race', and 'the analysis of ideas about race and cultural practices'.¹¹⁹ They argue that this has contributed to an increase in race-and-ethnicity work centred on text and theory.¹²⁰ By the same token, the same

¹¹³ Henn et al, *A Critical Introduction to Social Research* (2nd ed.) Chapter 1: 'What is Social Research'

¹¹⁴ Lusted provides a useful and evaluative discussion on the ways in which critical realism can be applied to empirical based sociological investigations. See Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England* Chapter 4: 'Methodology'

¹¹⁵ Arksey and Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists* p13

¹¹⁶ Bulmer and Solomos, 'Introduction' p10

¹¹⁷ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained* (trans) Don Barry et al, (Minneapolis, 1992) p8 cited in Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern* (London, 2005) p2

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Bulmer and Solomos, 'Introduction' p9

¹²⁰ Ibid.

period has witnessed something of a 'retreat from research... focused on empirical methods'.¹²¹ This situation prompted Bulmer and Solomos to remind those interested in the field of 'race' and ethnicity - and who embrace the postmodern position - that it remains important that 'research addresses the impact of racism in real-life situations.'¹²²

A postmodern perspective, according to Arksey and Knight, approaches visual (recordings), verbal and written accounts critically.¹²³ Such resources should not to be accepted as things which are passive, apolitical or neutral. They should, instead, be viewed as creations of the author and thus, conform to various political persuasions, bias and perceptions, which underpin their creation.¹²⁴ They are, in effect, interpretations.

This perhaps obvious point is clearly useful to ethnographers and historians interested in familiarising themselves - through the use of documented accounts - with their research subjects, or constructing an accurate wider picture, respectively. However, Aull-Davies is quick to point out that the researcher herself, also plays an intrinsic role within the construction of the data which they are analysing.¹²⁵ In this specific instance, this took place through my intrusion into the social world of my participants. It also took place through my own personal and scholarly perceptions of what constitutes valuable knowledge, my history and my 'broader socio-cultural circumstances'.¹²⁶ These factors impinged on what I thought I heard, and what I thought I saw. As a social historian, this principle might well be applied to what I thought I read also (what is read, for example, is not necessarily the same as what is written). In short, as the researcher I was both an objective observer and a subjective/active participant/influence within the social world that I was observing.

It is imperative that the conflation of these two standpoints is considered reflexively at every stage of the project (from project construction, to data interpretation and

¹²¹ Ibid. p10

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Arksey and Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists* p14

¹²⁴ Thompson, 'The Voice of the Past: Oral History'

¹²⁵ Charlotte Aull-Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (London, 1999)

¹²⁶ Arksey and Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists* p14

presentation). Aull-Davies warns that the researcher must also be mindful of the ways in which the blurring – or even disappearance - of the distinction between subject and object, ‘where one becomes the other’,¹²⁷ can ‘effectively den[y] the possibility of social research.’¹²⁸ I argue, however, that instead of empirical research being made redundant by these kinds of postmodernism insights, the opposite is also possible. That via a reflexive awareness of the influence of the objective and subjective statuses of the researcher on the social world with which they are concerned, and a greater awareness of the ways in which text, stories, interviews, observations, etc., are not neutral, but are things which are influenced by power, knowledge and interpretation, the chances of achieving expansive and critical ethnography are not only possible, but greatly increased.

Collecting the ethnographic data

The ethnographic data presented here were generated between June 2009 and September 2011. The data derived from a combination of participant observations, participation as observation and twenty-six semi-structured interviews. The latter consisted predominantly of participants from across what I have defined as the four levels of the club (management and sub-management committee, coaches/managers, players and the wider membership).

The exact number of interviewed participants from each of these identified categories is difficult to gauge, as almost all possessed dual or multiple roles within the club. One participant, for example, was a coach, player and management committee member. Five first-generation African-Caribbeans, who were not directly attached to the club, were also interviewed. These accounts provided some additional contextual and comparative data. The interviews took place either at the club, at the participants’ place of work, in their homes or at my University base (whichever was most convenient for the participant).

¹²⁷ Aull-Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* p5

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Initially, a small number of club members, who operated at different levels of the club, were identified and approached to be interviewed (i.e. committee member, coach, etc.). From here a ‘network’ or ‘snowballing’ method was employed, whereby the interviewed participant would usually ‘nominate’ or recommend another person who they believed ‘might be worth talking with’.¹²⁹ In this case, participants would often contact others on my behalf or provide me with contact details – and inform the nominated person that I would be contacting them (as well as vouch for my credibility or convince them to take part). The usefulness of this method was perhaps most clearly demonstrated when on one occasion, an important and particularly elusive ex-club member (who had not been involved with the club for a number of decades) happened to ‘pop in’ to my participant’s place of work while we were interviewing and was convinced by my participant to join in.

A significant proportion of the data presented were generated through my acceptance and integration into the social and sporting fabric of the Meadebrook Cavaliers club (participant observation and in particular, participation as observation). Throughout my two-and-half years spent within the club I took on the roles as assistant to various management committees, player and coach. My involvement in these roles altered the club members’ perceptions of me from the status of researcher, to that of club member and (in some instances) an integral part of the elite first-team squad (it was also another example of how I had impacted upon the social world which I was researching). As demonstrated when I asked current player, Marcus: “Is there anyone in the first-team that you would look up to as a role model?” He answered (rather surprisingly to me):

I think it’s you... [You] have been there and done that. And I think it's something to aspire to. To actually play football at that level for so long... And how you pass down your knowledge...

Pertinently here, as a Cavaliers player, I gained a unique insight into the cultures of the club. I was able to witness, experience and ‘log’, for example, the intensely masculine exchanges between team-mates and between managers and players. Such moments are usually confined within the changing room, or at least within the white lines of the

¹²⁹ Arksey and Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists* p4

football pitch (which are usually only accessible in research through second-hand-accounts).

Data also derived from the infinite number of conversations which took place between various club members and myself. These conversations would often take place spontaneously in various situations. These included, but were not limited to, conversations on the way to matches, in various clubhouses, in the changing rooms and on the telephone. They also included discussions which took place during matches, training sessions, nights out, social events, Fun Days, committee meetings and sub-committee meetings.

Although club members were *always* aware of my identity as a researcher (and that this was the primary purpose for my presence within the club), my respondents did not always respond to my researcher status. Put another way, as my immersion within Cavaliers' first-team milieu deepened (resulting in me becoming a member of the first-team committee, stand-in player/coach and captain) increasingly players, coaches and managers alike sought to include me in un-guarded private conversations. These ranged from conversations about player/team performances to personal frictions with other members, players or coaches (within the club). Unlike in a rather more formal interview setting and even though people in the club knew of my research, many of the issues discussed in this context and subsequently presented to me, were instigated solely by the participant and not led in any sense by the researcher.

During many of these more sensitive moments, I was unable to record these interactions instantly. Subsequently, these conversations were either written down or recorded on my Dictaphone (from memory) at the nearest convenient moment (usually within my car). This undoubtedly distorted, slightly, the veracity of recorded accounts. However, the richness and the sense of spontaneous authenticity which characterised these captured testimonies, I believe outweigh any data-collecting shortcomings of this particular method.

The spaces which I occupied within the organisation also meant that in many ways I became involved – or was perceived by some to be involved – within the micropolitics which existed within the club. Because I was seen to be 'in the first-team' or 'in the

management committee', for example, a few club members interpreted this to mean that I was affiliated with certain cliques, groups or people within the club. This was despite the club and its members being aware of my research purpose at all times. In some instances, initially this had had an adverse effect on my ability to reach, form relationships with and interview/talk to certain members who occupied other corners of the club. This was something that I had not predicted. I only became aware of this situation after about six months in the field, when during one interview with a club member, who had thus far proved to be particularly elusive, my participant explained:

You mean you did not know him [a particular club member] before you came to Cavaliers?! Oh! [he began to chuckle] The reason I had not really wanted to talk to you was that I thought you were brought in by him... I mean I don't mind him. He's always been alright with me... but I don't like what he's doing really.

After this point, a portion of my time (especially during the following six months) was spent convincing and reassuring club members that I was not affiliated to any particular sub-group or member. However, the processes of networking (snowballing) meant that soon after I had convinced a few of my neutrality with regards to club politics, they in turn 'vouched for my credibility' and recommended me to others who they knew had thus far been sceptical of talking to me - for these reasons.

It is important to acknowledge the ways in which these methods of data collection impacted on the data obtained and the resultant narrative presented. Because my skills benefitted the club at the management committee level and as a first-team player, the majority of time within the club was often spent within these spaces. Clearly this influenced who I spent the most time with, built the strongest relationships with and where many of my observations and insights were drawn.

Subsequently, it is important to recognise and 'consider how restricting the sample may influence the conclusions that are drawn', as, according to Arber, the problem with this method of sampling is that 'it only includes those within a connected network of individuals'.¹³⁰ It follows that the data gathered and presented within this thesis represents only *one* of *many* narratives of the Cavaliers club. Put another way, this

¹³⁰ Sara Arber, 'Designing Samples' in Nigel Gilbert, eds., *Researching Social Life* (2nd ed.) (London, 2005) p63

sociological and historical account is not the narrative of the Cavaliers club per-se, but rather the narrative of a specific group of African-Caribbean heritage *men* who occupied a specific section of this social and sporting space. By the same token, it is also an error to suggest, without caution, that the emergent findings and narratives presented here are representative of black men who exist beyond Leicester. As Arber points out:

Although these samples attempt to be representative of a specific category of people, they are not probability samples from which [more] precise inferences can be made about the population from which the same are drawn.¹³¹

The data offered throughout were only really ‘visible’ for research purposes because I had become a player for the Cavaliers club. This sort of approach to research, however, does require important ethical considerations. The Oral History Society, for example, states that ‘[i]t is unethical... to use interviews without the informed consent of the interviewee...’¹³² Similarly, the British Sociological Association states that, ‘[a]s far as possible participation in sociological research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied’.¹³³ It elaborates that ‘in some research contexts, especially those involving field research, it may be necessary for the obtaining of consent to be regarded, not as a once-and-for-all prior event, but as a process, subject to renegotiation over time...’¹³⁴ Furthermore, ‘Sociologists have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research.’¹³⁵ And that:

Where appropriate and practicable, methods for preserving anonymity should be used including the removal of identifiers, the use of pseudonyms and other technical means for breaking the link between data and identifiable individuals.¹³⁶

To satisfy the ethical stipulations identified, two consent forms were drafted. The first, a ‘Confirmation of Participation’ form, was signed on behalf of the organisation by the chairperson/senior committee member. The document outlined the following points:

¹³¹ Ibid. p62

¹³² www.oralhistory.org.uk/ethics/index.php (assessed on: 12.04.2009)

¹³³ The British Sociological Association, ‘Statement of Ethical Practice’ (2002) para.16

¹³⁴ Ibid. para.25

¹³⁵ Ibid. para.13

¹³⁶ Ibid. para.36

- Ratified the organisation's participation within the project
- The purpose of the research project
- Explained what participation within the project entailed (e.g. participant observations and interviews)
- Explained the organisation's – and its members' - rights to withdraw.

The second form, an individual 'Interview Consent Form', was signed by all participants prior to their individual interviews. It explained the following points:

- The purpose of the interview
- For what purpose and how the data will be used
- Who the interviewer is, and the body or bodies which they and the research are attached to
- How and where, if requested, participants can see how their data is used (prior to and after submission).
- All aspects of anonymity and rights to withdraw

As indicated above, all data was anonymised. This included changing the name of the institution, all individuals and the locality in which the case study is couched. This also included changing any signposts or references made to individuals or the organisation through secondary-sourced materials (such as scholarly texts, media publications, local government publications, etc.).

Although a generic access into the institution was granted by the management committee, each interviewee was reminded - prior to the interview - of the purpose of the research, the interview, their rights to withdraw and how they would be anonymised. With regards to the observation of activities which did not take place within a public space, individuals were always reminded that they were being observed and that they could refuse the recording of the event (or any part of the event). Furthermore, my researcher status was never covert or hidden. It was always clearly and repeatedly stated to all members of the club during my time within the organisation. Lastly, in addition to ensuring that the research conformed to the ethical codes of practices outlined by both

the Oral History Society and the British Sociological Association, the thesis (and its methods) was also approved by De Montfort University's Ethics committee.

Reflections on entering the world of my participants

"I know you see it..." [H]e [an African American participant] paused and waved his hands as if I had heard enough about a situation that would be familiar to me as an African American... I encouraged Ken to continue his narrative but, rather than saying anything more, he looked at me as if he was confused about my request. He finally shrugged his shoulders as if to convey, 'What more is to be said'? ...[N]ot only did [he] not say anymore, but also expressed some mild agitation...¹³⁷

The above quotation provides a useful introduction to some of the issues raised by what is referred to as the 'insider' research position. This is a reference to researchers who share membership to the same social groups as those who they are researching (i.e. gender, class, religion, ethnicity or 'race'). By the same token, those who do not share these connections are described as adopting an outsider position. The aim of this final section is to reflect upon - and open up some critical discussion centred on - the ways in which my insider status provided *both* advantages *and* challenges to achieving 'good ethnography'.¹³⁸ As Young Jr. argues: 'it is [also] crucial to think about how the insider status can sometimes work against that goal.'¹³⁹

Young Jr. emphasises that a key component of achieving successful qualitative research is the establishment of 'intimate' interactions with participants within their 'natural settings'.¹⁴⁰ Ethnography, then, requires the researcher to enter the social world of their participants. This methodology also requires the researcher to continuously reflect upon the ways in which immersing oneself into this social world influences their research,

¹³⁷ Alford A Young Jr., 'Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it' in Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, eds., *Researching Race and Racism* (London, 2004) p194/95

¹³⁸ Jon Garland et al, 'Hearing Lost Voices: Issues in Researching 'Hidden' Minority Ethnic Communities' *British Journal of Criminology* (46) 3 (2006) pp.423-437

¹³⁹ Young Jr., 'Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it' p201

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p187

and influences the data which they extrapolate.¹⁴¹ Consideration also needs to be given to the ways in which this process influences the researcher's ability to interpret this social world and their ability to accurately decipher what they have seen and what they have been told.

General academic consensus holds that researchers who can adopt an insider position are best placed to accurately decipher the elements which shape the social world of their participants (to achieve *verstehen*). By the same token, researchers who adopt an outsider position are expected to have to work 'particularly hard' to ensure their analyses are 'accurate'.¹⁴² In short, the insider position – in this case, an African-Caribbean, British male entering the black and male dominated space of an African-Caribbean, British founded football club – might be considered by some, as a particularly effective way of ensuring meaningful and accurate ethnography.

In many ways, however, this position appears to assume that 'race' and ethnicity is at *all times*, the central and unifying category between different 'black' men. Or in other words, it presumes that 'black' men – as a result of their colour – are more-often-than-not, best placed to relate socially, to other 'black' men. This position is particularly problematic. Bulmer and Solomos, for example, argue that there is growing evidence of a 'widening diversity' among 'black' people in late-modern Britain.¹⁴³ Within her work on class-fractions in African-American communities, Lacy, similarly found that the 'racialised' - or ethnic identities - of her participants were not salient 'at all times'.¹⁴⁴ Likewise, historian Panayi found that certain sections of immigrant communities residing in Britain, display a greater commonality and in turn, preference for living in neighbourhoods with people who share similar class – and not ethnic – statuses.¹⁴⁵ These sorts of complexities have in part, prompted the employment of new conceptual frameworks within the analysis of the black experience, such as 'Identity politics' and

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Bulmer and Solomos, 'Introduction' p6

¹⁴⁴ Karyn Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (California, 2007) p xvii

¹⁴⁵ Panikos Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945* (Manchester, 1994)

‘boundary work’.¹⁴⁶ The latter acknowledges the ways certain ‘black’ communities erect both ‘intra’ and ‘inter’ ethnic boundaries between themselves and other ‘black’ and ‘non-black’ communities, respectively.

In short, it is quite clearly apparent that structures such as class, generation, location and profession have in part destabilised notions of a single generic ‘black’ experience in late-modern Britain. For social research this may prove a crucial point. It follows that we must avoid assuming that being ‘black’ in a simple sense, ‘naturally’ enables the ‘black’ researcher to understand – or accurately decode – the experiences of his/her ‘black’ participants. This point has not gone unnoticed by academics, such as Garland et al and Gunaratnam.¹⁴⁷ The latter, for example, argues that increasingly: ‘minoritized researchers need to be just as troubled by our interpretations of racialized commonality’, as the wider research community is troubled by ‘interpretations of difference.’¹⁴⁸ Simply put, even for ‘black’ researchers exploring ‘black’ communities, it is not a case of whether ‘‘race’ and ethnicity affect the interviewing relationship, but, rather how and when...’¹⁴⁹ In this sense, it is important to explore what Young Jr. describes as: ‘the sometimes crippling effects of insider status’ on achieving expansive ethnography.¹⁵⁰ By the same token, I will also discuss some of ‘less-recognised virtues of outsidersness’ to ethnographic enquiry.¹⁵¹

At first I presumed that as second-generation black footballer, I would be familiar with - and empathic towards - the issues and experiences of my fellow ‘black’ participants. It soon became apparent, however, that my own experiences of racism and the ways in which I constructed my own ‘black’ identity were, at times, markedly different to my interviewees. During one early interview, for example, a club member began to talk about his annoyance and frustrations at some of the on-going developments within

¹⁴⁶ see Bulmer and Solomos, ‘Introduction’ p6 and Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* p9

¹⁴⁷ Garland et al, ‘Hearing Lost Voices: Issues in Researching ‘Hidden’ Minority Ethnic Communities’; Gunaratnam, *Researching ‘Race’ and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power*

¹⁴⁸ Gunaratnam, *Researching ‘Race’ and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power* p101-102

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p76-77

¹⁵⁰ Young Jr., ‘Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it’ p194

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p197

Cavaliers, and what he saw as the club's inability to recognise the potential dangers these developments brought:

[Currently, the first-team has] only four players [from Leicester]. And two of them are Englishmen! [white] That doesn't sit well with me: [...] *You know what I mean?* That's just wrong! ...the club doesn't see that, but I do."

The problem, however, was that in many ways I did *not* 'know what he meant'. In short, my own 'blackness' did not provide me with a 'natural', instant nor empathic understanding into these wholly *localised* 'black' narratives to which he referred. My own 'blackness', for example, provided little insight into the significance this specific 'black' man here, placed on a local 'black' football club to his social, political and historical construction of self. Furthermore, growing up in 1990s London, which at the time hosted no unified or overtly noticeable 'black' community presence like the one which my older respondents frequently romanticised, meant that the importance of having a local 'black' team as symbolically representative of a tangibly black community was again, something which I could not directly empathise with. In an instant my previously overstated notions of extreme 'insiderness' were shattered

Gunaratnam quite aptly points out that these kinds of realisations, often experienced by minoritized insiders, leaves them with little choice but to reassess and reevaluate their assumptions about shared meanings and experiences between them and their participants. She argues that this experience forces researchers to - at the level of analysis at least - treat instances where identities are considered to be something in common, 'with caution' and not to be taken at 'face value'.¹⁵² It followed that I was also forced to 'revaluate'. This meant combing through fieldwork diaries looking for instances where I had made assertions about 'their' social world based on *my* experiences - and not on theirs. In many ways I was forced to reflect upon the ways in which I was complicit within the construction of their history (knowledge). Put simply, I had to look for – and guard against - moments when I had not documented what they had said, but rather, I had documented what I 'knew'. In the best case scenario, failure to do so would mean that their history and my history became conflated. In the worst

¹⁵² Gunaratnam, *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power* p101

case, the history presented would be more my own, than it would be theirs. As Reay points out:

There is a thin dividing line between the understandings that similar experiences of respondents bring to the research process and... mixing up one's own personal history with very different ...experiences...¹⁵³

My relationships with my participants often hinged – initially, at least - on their presumption that I was ‘like’ them. These assumed connections also brought certain obstacles. For instance, African-American ethnographer, Young Jr., noted that the respondents in his study felt that they should not have to elaborate on certain things because, as a black man, Young Jr. should already be ‘in the know’.¹⁵⁴ As a result, asking what were perceived to be ‘obvious’ questions about ‘black’ issues appeared to irritate and frustrate a number of his participants. Moreover, asking such obvious questions might also alter the researcher’s status from extreme insider to a moderate insider - or even to an outsider. Mindful of such potential consequences, I had to select carefully the moments when I risked sacrificing my ‘insider’ position for elaboration, or risked sacrificing elaboration to protect my insider status.

The kinds of compromises to ethnographic research discussed here have prompted Young Jr. (and others)¹⁵⁵ to suggest that an outsider position may be more advantageous to achieving research-adequate results than convention might suggest. Researchers who possess outsider status, for example, are by their designation expected to be ignorant of issues which their participants might consider to be ‘obvious’. He argues that outsiders can adopt a position of complete ignorance and thus, create a ‘more expansive narrative’ on what may, at first glance, have seemed to be the most obvious of points (without irritating their participants or jeopardising the researcher/participant relationship).¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Diane Reay, ‘Insider Perspectives or Stealing the words out of Women’s Mouths: Interpretation in the Research Process’ *Feminist Review* (53) (Summer) 1996 pp.57-73 p65, cited in Gunaratnam, *Researching ‘Race’ and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power* p100

¹⁵⁴ Young Jr., ‘Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it’ p194

¹⁵⁵ Garland et al, ‘Hearing Lost Voices: Issues in Researching ‘Hidden’ Minority Ethnic Communities’

¹⁵⁶ Young Jr., ‘Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it’ p197

Pointing to another advantage, Song and Parker argue that their own outsider status was advantageous because, in certain instances, their participants felt more comfortable talking to someone outside of their community – who they believed would be less judgmental of their disclosures.¹⁵⁷ Such arguments are often neglected when evaluating the insider position.

Despite its short-comings, obtaining insider status *can* also assist in enabling the researcher to achieve a perspective, which is, in many ways, unachievable for researchers who possess an outsider status. Within the social world of my participants, in most instances my blackness – along with my football prowess, the main source of my insider status – impacted positively in my ability to construct intimate researcher/participant relationships in which participants felt comfortable sharing perhaps otherwise private views, during recorded interviews. I describe these views as private because at times, they were counterpoised to what we might describe as the ‘official’ - or majority - position of the Cavaliers club. They were also counterpoised to many of the disclosures which these men had made to other (white) researchers.

Cavaliers’ official stance with regards to the ways in which the organisation has racially/cultural diversified over the last 40 years, for example, is unequivocally positive (see *Chapter 7*). More recently, Cavaliers has positioned itself not as a ‘black’ club *per se*, but instead as something of a melting pot of the diverse communities found in late-modern Leicester. As one senior club-member told the BBC: “[Cavaliers has] always had a rich mix of black Caribbean players, Asian players, white players.”¹⁵⁸ Academic studies into the club conducted by ‘outsider’ researchers, have also rehearsed similar themes.¹⁵⁹ (White researcher) Daniel Burdsey, for example, has written that, ‘whilst Meadebrook Cavaliers has always been perceived as a black club in an *ethnic* sense, this

¹⁵⁷ Miri Song and David Parker, ‘Commonality, Difference and the Dynamics Disclosure in In-Depth Interviewing’ *Sociology* (29) 2 (1995) pp.241-256

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaKot0zLWzg>

¹⁵⁹ see Daniel Burdsey, ‘Forgotten fields? Centralizing the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Men’s Football Clubs in England’ *Soccer & Society* (10) 6 (2009) pp.704–721 p709; also see Steven Bradbury, ‘From Racial Exclusions to New Inclusions: Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Football Clubs in the East Midlands of England’ *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (46) 1 (2010) pp.1-22

applies more accurately to its political stance...'¹⁶⁰ This point is evidenced via a quote given by the club's chairman who explained to him: "[Cavaliers is] a club that belongs to everybody. What we are about is people coming together... that's the philosophy on which we operate."¹⁶¹

Against this apparent and at times overwhelmingly 'positive' view of the club's widening ethnic/cultural diversity, it was something of a surprise when during my interviews a number of participants voiced apprehensions about this development. Some claimed that it threatened the club's 'black' identity, its ethos and its informal mission to support the local 'black' community in the city. One member, for example, explained that it was only because the committee had remained predominantly 'black', that the club's 'black' ethos and community focus had remained intact. He elaborated that he believed if this situation changed, if someone from a rival BAME community accessed the management committee, for example, then this might not only lead to a significant change in ethos, but could lead to an eventual 'take[over] of the entire organisation' by 'non-black' members.¹⁶²

Maintaining 'black' leadership, as a way of ensuring that supporting the local black community remained a priority, was a strategy echoed by most who harboured reservations over the total ethnic/cultural diversification of the club:

[We] will remain a "black" club until the people who come on the committee change... If we get three or four [non-black] people come on the committee now, then then emphasis will change. You know that... You *need* black people on the committee to promote *black people*... (second-generation and African-Caribbean club member)

Interestingly, the few who expressed these kinds of concerns were often 'black' men who otherwise wholly embraced diversity within other areas of their lives. Some, for example, had 'non-black' wives, friends, loved ones, etc. Furthermore, these men saw themselves as being just as British as they were 'black' (culturally) - arguably more so. With regards to their football club, however, complete ethnic diversification was an

¹⁶⁰ Burdsey, 'Forgotten fields? Centralizing the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Men's Football Clubs in England' p715

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Fieldwork Journal April 1, 2010

issue on which feelings were not as clear-cut as described at the outset – feelings were instead ambivalent. This point is neatly captured when the participant concluded: “Obviously people realise you can’t solely be a ‘black’ club [anymore]... *but I* would like the club to remain a ‘black’ club”.

Because of my insider status (and being considered old enough to remember the more visible and coherent ‘black’ community to which these men frequently referred) my second-generation black participants would frequently assume that their concerns would be familiar to me as a second-generation African-Caribbean man (and were thus, happy to talk about them with me). By the same token, anxieties caused by issues such as a diminishing ‘black’ presence within the club (and within wider Leicester) were things which some of the interviewees believed *most* white people *and* most younger African-Caribbeans simply, would not, did not and could not understand. In short, as a 30-something, second-generation British African-Caribbean, in most instances I did not have to work particularly hard to convince my participants of my ability to empathise with their anxieties on these kinds of issues – it was often assumed, and thus, spoken about freely (at times even enthusiastically). I cannot help but think, however, this may not have been the case if my status was outsider.

Lastly, the apparent contrast between my data and the data extrapolated elsewhere by mostly white researchers, perhaps indicates that in certain ways, my insider status may have, in part, enabled me to access and chart empirically, narratives which my participants may not have been willing to disclose to ‘outsider’ researchers (many of my interviewees have also taken part in research conducted by other ‘outsider’ researchers). Against this, my insider status appeared to be central within the construction of a nuanced, rich and a previously untold history of the club and its African-Caribbean members.

Concluding comments

The chapter began by me describing how methods traditionally associated with history enabled me to (re)construct the ‘larger picture’ c.1970-2010. While qualitative methods - and in particular techniques of ethnography - enabled me to produce a detailed account

of the lived and everyday experiences of the club and its membership throughout this period. The decision to employ ethnography was also informed by my theoretical position with regards to the ontological statuses of 'race', 'racialised' bodies and ethnicity (as well as community and identity).

Attention then focused on the ways in which an increasingly fractured 'black' experience within late-modern Britain, also presented problems for qualitative study. It quickly became apparent, for example, that the usefulness of my own insider status was perhaps overstated. At times, it brought with it analytical complacency and presumptions/assumptions of shared meanings and understandings when there were few or none. By assuming mutual understandings of meanings and experiences, it became evident that, initially, my own analyses drew more on my own experiences than it did on those of my participants. It should be noted, however, that such issues were/are not insurmountable. Being immersed within the club for thirty months (often five-days-per-week), enabled me to identify and reflect upon instances when assumptions of sameness were inaccurate. For example, it enabled me to sample first-hand, witness, and for brief moments 'feel', many of the social-issues which my interviewees had made reference to. Narratives and issues on which I may have at first, inaccurately assumed shared meaning (particularly within the interview setting). Thus, it is apparent that while it may be the case that outsider researchers may have to work particularly hard to accurately decipher meanings, often, insiders also have to work particularly hard to ensure that the narratives constructed are not their own.

I concluded here by exploring what we might describe as the lesser cited benefits bought by outsider status. It was apparent that enquiry into what appeared to be 'obvious' issues were at times, out-of-bounds to insiders. It would often be assumed (by participants) that if the researcher really was 'like them', then such expansions were pointless – even patronising. The experiences of African-American ethnographer, Young Jr. were particularly insightful here.¹⁶³ He found that his 'black' participants, at times, became frustrated and irritated by being asked to expand on what they perceived to be obvious 'black' issues, by a 'black' man whom they had thus far, presumed was

¹⁶³ Young Jr., 'Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it'

like them. Exposure of such ignorance not only caused irritation, but in certain instances, it could even present a threat to the researcher's insider status (and their established relationships with the research group). Against this, there is growing – although still relatively scarce – methodological position which suggests that outsider status may be best placed to achieve expansive ethnography into the everyday issues which communities face.

Despite these shortcomings, being an insider undoubtedly aided the ethnography within this thesis (more than it hindered it). For example, it enabled access into private social spaces and facilitated an environment in which personal narratives were shared freely (views and spaces which were perhaps otherwise out-of-bounds to outsider researchers). There is a growing number of ethnographic enquires which demonstrate the willingness of participants to share intimate views - *within an interview setting* - with researchers who possess similar (or the 'right') 'racial', ethnic, social or cultural capital. Within sports sociology, Jim Lusted's (a white sociologist) thesis offers a rather straightforward example of this.¹⁶⁴ Exploring the views of County Football Association workers on sport equity policy, some of his white participants openly explained how they were acting *against* policies which assisted BAME clubs and communities. Lusted's work provides a useful demonstration of the ways in which shared membership of the same ethno-racial group (as well as gender and class) can in part, prompt: (1) assumptions on the part of the participant, of commonality of views, feelings and experiences between them and the researcher; and (2) a greater willingness to talk about such issues. Put simply, it is highly unlikely that Lusted's white respondent would have made such disclosures to me (or most other BAME researchers). Greater consideration of these last points may be crucial if we are to achieve 'deep', 'accurate' and perhaps more 'honest' ethnography in future – particularly with regards to studies focused on social discrimination.

Such immersion practices, however, undoubtedly raise important ethical questions. They also raise important questions around researcher objectivity and subjectivity. On this last point ethnographer, Patillo-McCoy, argues that the benefits of such techniques

¹⁶⁴ Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England*; Also see Lusted, 'Playing Games with Race: Understanding Resistance to 'Race' Equality Initiatives in English local Football Governance' *Soccer and Society* (10) 6 (2009) pp.722-739

often outweigh their ‘shortcomings’.¹⁶⁵ Openly admitting that during her investigation into classed communities, she was ‘rarely an objective or a dispassionate observer’, she argues that her immersion greatly ‘enriched’ her presented narrative.¹⁶⁶ It was central in enabling the construction of an ‘honest’, deep and rich account of the social realities and issues which her participants faced. By the same token, however, it is equally apparent that the production of a critical, expansive and honest ethnographic account requires more than researcher immersion. As Young Jr. concludes:

[G]ood research is not achieved simply by ‘getting in’ or by achieving extreme immersion into the everydayness of a community. Rather, good research maybe achieved in part by the researcher committing to sincere reflexive thought...¹⁶⁷

As illustrated by the debates and issues interrogated here, the ethnography presented throughout this thesis have been underpinned, and consequently shaped by, an interpretative and inductive approach. Whereby a theoretic label was not employed from the outset, but instead the key themes explored emerged from an analysis of the data collated. The narrative (re)presented throughout is underpinned by the *researcher’s* critical interpretations of the meanings interviewees attached to their (and others’) changing sporting, ‘racialised’ and social identities; and to the various and changing roles of the Cavaliers club between 1970 and 2010.

¹⁶⁵ Mary Patillo-McCoy, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* (Chicago, 2000)

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p7

¹⁶⁷ Young Jr., ‘Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it’ p200

Chapter 3

Immigration in Britain:

Leicester and the first-generation of African-Caribbeans c.1900-1968

Introduction

Before I explore some of the ways in which local football as a cultural activity has influenced and reflected developments within a section of Leicester's African-Caribbean community, I must first - by way of context – place this group within what we might describe as the wider immigration picture in Britain. This chapter attempts to sketch-out the following: the wider pattern of immigration in Britain and Leicester during the twentieth-century and the place of immigration from the Caribbean within this wider context; the identity politics of the post-war, first-generation Caribbean immigrants; the black experience in Britain c1948-1960; the ways in which the first-generation of worker's black experience in Leicester was both typical and atypical; and finally, what we might call the 'racial climate' in Leicester during the 1960s – the decade when Leicester's second-generation Caribbeans emerged in the city. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into four sub-sections.

Immigrants in Britain c.1900-1948

Holmes asserts that it would be difficult to locate any period in British history 'where some immigration did not take place.'¹⁶⁸ By the turn of the twentieth-century, according to Panayi, the largest immigrant community in Britain were the Irish, who numbered around 1,000,000.¹⁶⁹ With regards to size and national identity alone, the Irish were followed by the German community, which in 1911 consisted of around 53,500

¹⁶⁸ Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* (London, 1988) p3

¹⁶⁹ Panikos Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945* (Manchester, 1994) p23

people.¹⁷⁰ Another 300,000 immigrants in Britain were made up of various smaller Italian, French, Spanish, Indian and African communities.¹⁷¹ The outbreak of war in 1914 brought an intense period of British immigration.¹⁷² Simply put, war brought more ‘foreign’ communities into Britain. Some 240,000 Belgians, for example, took refuge in Britain.¹⁷³ They were joined by 15,000 Russian refugees who arrived in 1921.¹⁷⁴

Holmes argues that conscription resulted in more non-white faces in Britain, and an increasing black visibility within mainland conurbations. Prior to World War One, and for much of the previous century, ‘coloured communities’ typically, worked and resided within port towns or within the docks of Britain’s larger cities¹⁷⁵ – although some black sportsmen, as Phil Vasili has highlighted, could be found representing football, cricket and athletics clubs in, and around, Lancashire from the late 1800s onwards.¹⁷⁶ The need, however, to draft young white workers into the front line during World War One, meant an abundance of new and mainland work for black seamen and for black immigrants.¹⁷⁷ Holmes notes that it was these kinds of shortages, particularly within Britain’s munitions and chemicals industries, which brought an increased – albeit, still small – black presence to Britain’s north and midlands regions.¹⁷⁸

Although immigration slowed during the interwar years, an amalgamation of various census data suggests that England and Wales still had fairly sizable migrant communities during this period. Data indicates that in 1931, for example, the number of foreign born persons in Britain was 688,839 and consisted of Irish (381,089), French (29,175), Greek (2,187), Italians (20,023), Germans (28,048), Russians (36,133), Polish (43,912) and Chinese (5,793) communities, as well as people born in the United States (37,420).¹⁷⁹ Panayi warns, however, that these crude figures and categories also mask as

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Holmes, *John Bull’s Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* p80

¹⁷⁵ Tony Kushner, ‘Immigration and ‘Race Relations’ in Postwar British Society’ in Paul Johnson, eds., *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (Harlow, 1994)

¹⁷⁶ Phil Visali, *The First Black Football Arthur Wharton 1865-1930* (London, 1998)

¹⁷⁷ Holmes, *John Bull’s Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* p88

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p89

¹⁷⁹ Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945* p51

much as they show.¹⁸⁰ They do not, for example, include persons born in the ‘old colonies’. Nor do they include travelling communities.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, they also mask the number of people who were attached to what we might describe as ‘ethno-religious’ groups, such as the Jewish community. The ethno-religious identities of this group, for example, *at times* transcended their separate national identities.

Britain’s male workforce in the 1940s, which had been severely depleted by the Second World War, again provided a significant – and popularly purported – stimulus for the attraction of more foreigners into Britain during the immediate post-war period. A combination of displaced persons, refugees and prisoners of war provided a readymade – albeit limited – source of labour for a British economy which was desperately short of manpower.¹⁸² It also provided a pool of workers – predominantly white – who could either be easily removed once the need for their services had expired, or who could be assimilated relatively easily into Britain’s white host community.¹⁸³ Through various European Volunteer Workers (EVWs) schemes, Britain recruited some 80,000 foreign workers.¹⁸⁴ In 1946, for example, the *Balt Cygnet* and the *Westward Ho!* schemes brought Eastern Europeans to Britain from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and placed them within industries – and within locales – where labour was in shortest supply.¹⁸⁵

Britain did not draw its new labour power solely from Europe. The British Government also drew workers from the ‘old colonies’. In 1948, for example, *HMS Windrush* docked at Tilbury carrying a small cohort of ‘coloured’ Caribbean workers and ex-servicemen (soon followed by the *Orbita* and *Georgic*).¹⁸⁶ *The Evening Standard* welcomed *Windrush* by describing its passengers as ‘500 pairs of willing hands.’¹⁸⁷ The new Caribbean workers were distributed around mainland cities and towns which had the severest labour deficits. These conurbations included cities such as London and Bristol in the South and Manchester and Leeds in the North. Cities involved across the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Kushner, ‘Immigration and ‘Race Relations’ in Postwar British Society’

¹⁸³ Holmes, *John Bull’s Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971*

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p213

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. Also see Trevor Philips and Mike Philips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, 1999)

¹⁸⁷ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1991) p372

Midlands included Birmingham, Nottingham and the relatively prosperous East Midlands city of Leicester.

The Meadebrooks: Immigration and Leicester c.1900 – 1950

Leicester's robust and diverse economy and cultures can be dated back to developments in the nineteenth century. Prior to World War Two the staples of Leicester's economy were hosiery, boot-wear and engineering. From the 1960s onwards, its economy diversified, offering work in newly emerging industries such as, electrics and electronic engineering.¹⁸⁸ Leicester's strong economy and healthy employment patterns have often been cited as a central factor behind the city's long relationship with immigration. It is arguable that Leicester, like the other larger cities across the Midlands, has been 'a global city since at least the eighteenth century.'¹⁸⁹ In later periods, most of Leicester's immigrant workers have settled within centrally located locales, often within the Meadebrooks neighbourhood.

Built in the 1860s, Simmons argues that the Meadebrooks area's spacious design and tall grand houses made it a 'sought-after' location among Leicester's socially elite.¹⁹⁰ The area's affluence was reflected in the erection of the grand Bartholomew's church and the building of Langdon Hall, in 1879 and 1891 respectively.¹⁹¹ The production of costly buildings not only demonstrated the affluence of Meadebrooks' communities, it also demonstrated the area's ethnic diversity. The erection of a Synagogue on Meadebrook Street in 1897, for example, pointed to what Simmons described as Meadebrooks' 'significant' Jewish community.¹⁹²

From 1900 onwards, the Meadebrooks' ethnic and cultural diversity widened further. By the end of the 1800s its affluent middle classes (including many from its Jewish

¹⁸⁸ see David Reeder et al, 'The Local Economy' in David Nash and David Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Gloucestershire, 1993)

¹⁸⁹ Malcolm Dick and Rajinder Dandah, 'Introduction: Ethnic Community Histories in the Midlands' *Midland History* (36) 2 (2011) pp.143-48 p145

¹⁹⁰ Jack Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present Volume 2: Modern City* (London, 1974) p10

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

community) had suburbanised.¹⁹³ The Meadebrooks' large and centrally located houses became ideal dwellings for the city's increasing number of workers from England's neighbouring countries, who were in part, attracted because of Leicester's abundance of work.¹⁹⁴ Nash et al, for example, argue that in 1911, Leicester was home to some 1,059 Scottish, 886 Irish and 448 non-British workers.¹⁹⁵ The outbreak of war three years later brought (more) refugees to Leicester – including one-thousand from Belgium.¹⁹⁶ It was, however, Leicester's Irish community which eventually became the dominant presence within the Meadebrooks, through to the interwar years.

Panayi notes that many immigrant communities in Britain 'maintained their ethnicity' in various ways and through various political, cultural and social organisations.¹⁹⁷ Watley identifies 'churches' and social clubs as spaces which often served this purpose.¹⁹⁸ Nash et al, however, demonstrate the often complex and shifting roles played by these spaces of ethnic maintenance (and counter-hegemony). They argue that in the case of the Irish community, it was their churches, social activities and public houses which acted as significant 'points of entry' between the Irish and host community.¹⁹⁹ In many ways these spaces also facilitated the Irish community's eventual dispersal from the Meadebrooks, and its integration into mainstream Leicester.²⁰⁰

As discussed previously, one effect of World War Two on Britain's economy was a severe shortage of manpower.²⁰¹ The impact of this was particularly potent within the city of Leicester. Unlike many other British cities, Leicester's diverse economy - which by the 1950s included services and light engineering - had meant that it had been relatively immune to the economic down turn of the 1930s and 1940s. It also

¹⁹³ Ibid. p104

¹⁹⁴ David Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational Life' in Nash and Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century*

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p182-3

¹⁹⁶ Joanna Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* (Aldershot, 2005) p21

¹⁹⁷ Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945* p97

¹⁹⁸ George Watley, 'The Cultural Currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c.1960-1990' *Midland History* (36) 2 (2011) pp.245-61 p249

¹⁹⁹ Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational' p183

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

contributed to the Leicester economy's sustained growth between 1948 and 1974.²⁰² These circumstances resulted in Leicester companies often having to resort to what we might describe as aggressive strategies to boost manpower. This included: 'bussing' in workers from outlying villages and cities; offering monetary rewards for workers who brought a friend; and fast tracking semi-skilled workers into skilled work.²⁰³ Even local industries which were in decline, such as the boot-wear and textile industries, still found labour being outstripped by demand. Consequently, it was not uncommon to see representatives of rival firms waiting at the gates of companies which had folded that day, touting its recently redundant staff.²⁰⁴

In 1949, engineering, alongside textiles and the National Health Service, had been identified by the Ministry of Labour as areas which were experiencing particular shortages in labour.²⁰⁵ Subsequently, during the post-war period European workers (EVWs) were injected into the Midlands' economy, where such industries were particularly prominent. Leicester, for example, became home to small Lithuanian, Latvian, Ukrainian,²⁰⁶ Polish and Italian communities.²⁰⁷

Some of the large Victorian houses that characterised the Meadebrooks area, which had managed to survive both the various housing modernisation programmes, and the Nazi bombing raids on the city,²⁰⁸ by now, had been divided into 'flats' and single units.²⁰⁹ Simmons points out that as Leicester entered the 1950s the transformed homes in the Meadebrooks area had 'come to offer exactly the kind of quarters' that poor immigrant workers and their families 'would be looking for on their arrival to the city...' The 'sort who began to come Leicester in large numbers at this time...' ²¹⁰ Within this cohort of new immigrants settling within the Leicester Meadebrooks during the post-war period, was the first-generation of black workers from the Caribbean.

²⁰² Reeder et al, 'The Local Economy'

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ian R. G. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, 1997) p38

²⁰⁶ Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* p21

²⁰⁷ Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational'

²⁰⁸ Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present Volume 2: Modern City*

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p104

²¹⁰ Ibid

The Black Workers from the Caribbean

Key points need to be addressed in order to fully comprehend black immigration to Britain and the black immigrant community from the Caribbean. These include: What factors brought them to Britain and to Leicester? What were the identity politics of this group? What was the local and national black experience in Britain? These questions shape the parameters of this section.

With regards to the number of immigrants entering Britain, the second half of the 1950s represented a high period of post-war immigration from the Caribbean (and the old colonies more widely). Byron suggests that the mean total of immigration from the Caribbean between 1955 and 1961 was 221,000,²¹¹ with Jamaica (64.5%), Barbados (8.5%) and Trinidad (4.3%) the top three exporters of Caribbean labour.²¹²

Lawrence places Jamaica's extraordinarily high levels of unemployment as a central factor underpinning its position as the highest exporter of Caribbean labour. He argues, for example, that in 1943, unemployment in Jamaica was forty per cent, with ninety per cent of its 250,000 registered workers earning less than £2 per week.²¹³ Panayi reminds us, however, that high levels of poverty and significant 'underemployment' were prominent features of most – if not all – of the Caribbean islands during this period.²¹⁴

High levels of unemployment in the Caribbean and an abundance of employment opportunities in the United Kingdom were only two factors in the decision of young men and women from the Caribbean to migrate to Britain. Historians and sociologists have highlighted myriad factors which influenced Caribbean immigration. These include: the historical and discursive relationship between Britain and the Caribbean and the call of the 'motherland'; young aspirational people seeking adventure; the right to free entry; and the McCarran-Walter Act (1952), which restricted Caribbean immigration to the United States. Against this complex picture, Lawrence concludes

²¹¹ Margaret Byron, *Post-war Caribbean migration to Britain: The Unfinished Cycle* (Aldershot, 1994) p79

²¹² Ibid

²¹³ Daniel Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives* (London, 1974) p15

²¹⁴ Panikos Panayi, *The Impact of Immigration* (Manchester, 1999) p36

that for many young Caribbeans, coming to Britain was ‘the logical choice’.²¹⁵ Important to note, however, is the fact that for the overwhelming majority of young Caribbeans, their stay in Britain was never intended to be a permanent one (I well remember my mother and her friends frequently reminiscing on how their own British ‘adventure’ was not intended to last beyond five years). It is debatable whether so many young people would have decided to leave the Caribbean if they knew then that they would never return, permanently, to their country of birth, friends and family.

Chessum argues that the essentially labour-driven episode of post-war immigration to Britain resulted in the emergence of Caribbean communities in mainland cities and towns in England which had the severest labour deficits, which could not be filled by members of the host nation, or by imported white labour from Europe.²¹⁶ Against this, Lawrence postulates that during the high-point of immigration from the ‘old colonies’ the (East) Midlands was a region with a ‘high demand’ for labour.²¹⁷ Subsequently, it was during this period that small but noticeable black communities became established across the Midlands in cities such as Birmingham,²¹⁸ Derby, Northampton,²¹⁹ Nottingham²²⁰ and Leicester.²²¹

Prior to the post-war period it was only on rare occasions that local people would see a black face in Leicester’s streets. This was either an American GI or an African university student.²²² Caribbean migration to Leicester during the first half of the 1950s was largely unnoticeable. In 1951, for example, there were approximately 5,089 whites for every one Caribbean migrant in the city.²²³ This ratio widened further to 5,593 when placed within the context of Leicestershire.²²⁴ In short, prior to 1955 Leicester was a city that, despite its tradition for being attractive to immigrant workers, remained relatively untouched by Caribbean migration. It was during the second half of this

²¹⁵ Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives* p15

²¹⁶ Lorna Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority* (Aldershot, 2000) p45

²¹⁷ Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White natives* p102

²¹⁸ Kevin Myers and Ian Grosvenor, ‘Birmingham Stories: Local Histories of Migration and Settlement and the Practice of History’ *Midland History* (36) 2 (2011) pp.149-62

²¹⁹ Watley, ‘The Cultural Currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c.1960-1990’

²²⁰ Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives*

²²¹ Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority*

²²² Ibid. p42

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

decade that a small, but noticeable, cohort of black Caribbean workers settled in the city - the overwhelming majority within the Meadebrooks neighbourhood.

An interesting feature of Leicester's cohort of Caribbean workers was that they consisted, predominantly, of Antiguan (and not Jamaican) workers. This is rather significant, as, according to Byron, Antiguan only accounted for approximately 2.1 per cent of the *total* Caribbean workforce which entered Britain between 1955 and 1961.²²⁵ The reasons for this Antiguan influx, however, remain unclear, beyond self-recruitment patterns via kinship and friendship networks. Beyond this peculiarity, the identity politics of Leicester's Caribbean workers were largely typical of the wider British picture.

To gain a deeper understanding of the identity politics of the workers from the Caribbean, Watley's observation provides a useful starting place. He argues that when trying to engage or analyse the identity politics of the cohort of Caribbean workers who relocated to Britain during this period, the term 'African-Caribbean' community 'as a description of ethno-racial identity ...has virtually no meaning'.²²⁶ Similarly, Dick and Dundrah argue that as a descriptive term, the notion of 'African-Caribbeans' for this cohort of immigrants hides 'as much as it reveal[s]'.²²⁷ Crudely put, these arguments are drawn, largely, from the contention that the notion of a unified African-Caribbean identity or community at this point, did not exist in the minds or identity politics of the black workers from the Caribbean region. Put simply, the black workers who originated from separate islands which were, in some cases, the same distance from each other as Moscow is from London, did not see themselves as members of *one* and the same ethnic group.²²⁸

The Caribbean immigrants to Britain brought with them their own highly complex 'social divisions'. On one level these divisions were found on matters of caste and complexion. The following lengthy extract taken from C.L.R. James' classic, *Beyond a Boundary*, skilfully demonstrates this point:

²²⁵ Byron, *Post-war Caribbean migration to Britain: The Unfinished Cycle* p79

²²⁶ Watley, 'The Cultural Currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c.1960-1990' p249

²²⁷ Dick and Dundrah, 'Introduction: Ethnic Community Histories in the Midlands' p148

²²⁸ Winston James, 'Migration, Racism and Identity Formation: The Caribbean Experience in Britain' in Winston James and Clive Harris, eds., *Inside Babylon* (London, 1993)

The Negroid population of the West Indies is composed of a large percentage of actually black people and about fifteen or twenty per cent of people who are of a varying combination of white and black. From the days of slavery these have always claimed superiority to the ordinary black, and a substantial majority of them still do... With emancipation in 1834 the blacks themselves established a middle-class. But between the brown-skinned middle class and the black there is a continual rivalry, distrust and ill-feeling... There are the nearly white hanging on tooth and nail to the fringes of white society, and these, as easy to understand, hate contact with the darker skin... Then there are the browns, intermediates, who cannot by any stretch of the imagination pass as white, but who will not go one inch towards mixing with people darker than themselves... Associations are formed of brown people who will not admit into their number those too much darker than themselves, and there have been heated arguments in committee as to whether such and such a person's skin was fair enough to allow him or her to be admitted without lowering the tone of the institution... [T]he dark-skinned brother in a fair-skinned family is sometimes... not required at the family social functions. Fair-skinned girls who marry dark men are often ostracized by their families... Should the darker man, however, have money or position of some kind, he may aspire, and it is not too much to say that in a West Indian colony the surest sign of a man having arrived is the fact that he keeps company with people lighter in complexion than himself.²²⁹

James' work indicates that these divisions were also bound up with issues of social class. The following accounts, taken from some of my first-generation Caribbean participants, Hector, Netty, and Neville, illustrate further what we might describe as intra-racial and class facilitated polarisations among the new UK workers. Additionally, they also provide an insight into how divisions among the black workers were widened by inter-island rivalries and notions of cultural and educational superiority/inferiority linked to island nationalities:

I remember in the early days, when you see a girl who go to Queens College: One of them top schools... (Kissing his teeth) Flipping hell! ...if you try to say: "Hello?" You must be joking! (Laughing out loud) You must be joking! (Hector, Barbadian)

Jamaica is a big place and illiteracy was very rampant... one day this guy (from Jamaica) came to our flat in Stepney looking for our landlord. It was cold so I said: "Come in..." But I couldn't understand half of what he was saying. Not being funny. This guy... says: "Where una' come from?" And I thought: "What did he say"? So my sister said: "He wants to know where we come from." So I said: "...Antigua"...The man looked at me and said: "I tell you the truth 'picknie'

²²⁹ C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London, 1963) p57-58

(child), Jamaica's so big, me no know dat' part dere'?" ...They never go school... [but] we (Antiguans) did! And we knew when Jamaica was discovered... We had to know our history... (Netty, Antigua)

[I]t took me two weeks to come here [by boat].... We have to stop at the different islands and take passengers. And some of the time, many of the islands don't big as Jamaica [this was said with sense of pride as he elucidated]. In Jamaica the biggest ships can go straight inside! When we go to St. Lucia we have to stay in the water, and the small boats have to bring them passengers on the ship because their island's too small... I'm from the biggest island ...not a small one! (Neville, Jamaican)

It is apparent that this group of black workers from the Caribbean – the first-generation African-Caribbeans – was actually highly divided by language and aspects of culture. Furthermore, their separate and unique island accents, histories and cultures were things whose importance was accentuated once they left their homes in the Caribbean. First-generation Antiguan participant, Denton, for example, states that simply, these were things which he and others “would try to cling on to.”

In Britain, however, the Caribbean workers experienced a different form of racialised discrimination. This was a less nuanced form of racial discrimination to the kinds which they exercised and were accustomed to back in the Caribbean. Ironically, racism here was arguably one of the few ‘processes’ which the black workers encountered in Britain which was colour-blind. Simply put, in Britain all those who were not white were frequently considered - by members of the host nation - to be indistinguishably as black as the next person of colour. This kind of crude and blanket racism recognised all blacks - regardless of their island of birth, class-capital, or complexion - as “darkies”, “wogs”, “coons” and “niggers”.

Most Caribbean immigrants were subjected to racial prejudice, discrimination and social rejection by many of the white Britons which they encountered. This was often to the surprise of many of the workers, who viewed themselves as British citizens. Alongside being rejected from social and public spaces, the young men and women from the Caribbean also experienced what we might describe as a structural ghettoisation within Britain's employment and housing spheres.

Employment

The post-war period, and in particular the 1950s, was a period of relative affluence for Britain. Holmes highlights that new 'production line' inspired manufacturing industries prompted the arrival of a new type of working class engineer who was skilled and well-paid: 'the technocrat'.²³⁰ This, alongside a period of 'surplus' employment, meant that Britain's working classes soon developed a distaste for the most unattractive urban jobs; usually those which were either excessively physically demanding or unsociable (or both).²³¹ Lawrence argues that it was these kinds of jobs - left by both native white workers and white workers from Europe - which were more often-than-not filled by Caribbean labour.²³² The abundance of low skilled jobs meant that finding work was relatively easy for the new Caribbean immigrants. During this period, it was not uncommon for employed Caribbean workers to be 'pinched' by rival firms who would gazump their salaries. Despite this freedom of movement, employment mobility for black workers was seldom vertical.

During this period, the threat of immigration to white working class jobs was a commonly rehearsed rhetoric cited by various parliamentarians, trade union officials, sections of the national press, and the general public. Partly to appease such concerns, gentlemen's agreements were often made between industry and trade unions. Basically, these agreements were designed to protect white jobs.²³³ Thus, they often included terms such as: if the employer had to make redundancies, black workers would be the first to go;²³⁴ and that black workers were not to be placed in positions of authority over white workers²³⁵ (referred to by some, as not having the 'whip' hand over white workers').²³⁶

²³⁰ Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* p230

²³¹ For a detailed discussion on Britain's 'period of affluence' see Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London, 1996); 'Social Trends, Structures, Values and Behaviours' in Jonathan Hollowell, eds., *Britain since 1945* (London, 2003); Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998)

²³² Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives*

²³³ Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* p374-376

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ 'Speech that Raised a Storm' *Birmingham Post* April 4, 1968

Similar kinds of agreements were exercised locally. The Leicester based company *Tubes*, for example, entered into a gentleman's agreement with the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). Its terms ensured that workers from the old colonies paid union subsidies, and that during periods of economic hardship, it was black workers who would be 'let go' first.²³⁷ Additionally, companies often imposed racialised 'house rules.' One common house rule was that black men were not permitted to work in close proximity to white women (the sexual prowess and deviancy of the 'black male' was one which was particularly fixed in the national and local white imagination).²³⁸ Evidence of this in the local context, was present in a letter published in the *Leicester Mercury*, from an over-worked female employee in a Leicester hosiery factory. She observed that while her employers recruited black men for the (male orientated and well-staffed) factory, to her annoyance, potential male black workers were turned away from administrative positions - even though the company was particularly short-staffed in this area: 'We cannot understand why no workers are better than coloured workers.'²³⁹

A combination of gentlemen's agreements and an abundance of vacancies in lowly, physically demanding and/or socially undesirable jobs, contributed to a situation whereby many Caribbean workers found themselves only able to access work which was often below the level to which they were qualified.²⁴⁰ The Nottingham Labour exchange, for example, listed all black immigrants as being fit solely, for semi-skilled and manual labour.²⁴¹ Among other things, this structural ghettoisation in employment also reinforced deeply embedded ideas that black people were cognitively inferior to British whites,²⁴² and consequently, better suited to manual tasks of the body.²⁴³

²³⁷ Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority* p132

²³⁸ Stories of African-Caribbean men 'seeking out' young and vulnerable white women (especially white prostitutes), for example, were common within a number of national and local newspapers during this period.

²³⁹ Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority* p130

²⁴⁰ John Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass* (Aldershot, 1988) p17

²⁴¹ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London, 2006) p331

²⁴² Ibid. p328

²⁴³ Justine Baillie, 'Contesting ideologies; Deconstructing Racism in African-American Fiction' *Woman and Cultural Review* (14) 1 (2003) pp.20-37

Housing

The first problem is not work but housing. West Indian colonies have sprung up... in London, in Birmingham, Nottingham, Leeds... it is precisely in those areas that supply of houses falls most desperately short of the need.²⁴⁴

This extract, taken from *The Times* newspaper in 1954, provides a neat introduction to the kinds of concerns expressed around the issue of housing and colonial immigration. It provides a useful example of the perceived threat which the alleged 'boat loads' of immigrants posed to the ability of the everyday and white British family's chances of acquiring suitable housing.²⁴⁵ John Rex argues that this was often not the case. He notes that in most cases, immigrant workers from the old colonies were 'institutionally stymied' from accessing the three conventional routes to acquiring housing in Britain.²⁴⁶ To acquire a mortgage, for example, black workers – who often had little access to wealth – had to find sizable deposits. Additionally, Sandbrook points out that black immigrants often had to pay an additional 2.5 - 5% (of the house's value) in the form of a 'colour premium'.²⁴⁷

Acquiring a council property was equally difficult. Byron, notes that black workers often had to wait up to – and in excess of - five years before being placed on council lists.²⁴⁸ Landlords within the mainstream letting market were also reluctant to rent to black immigrants. According to Sandbrook, one 1953 survey of London-based-landlords found that 80 per cent would not let to either Africans or Caribbeans.²⁴⁹ Holmes argues that when challenged, landlords would frequently claim that they were

²⁴⁴ 'The West Indian Settlers: I - First Signs Of A British Colour Problem' *The Times* November 8, 1954

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ John Rex, 'Urban segregation and Inner city policy in urban Britain' in Ceri Peach, Vaughan Robinson and Susan Smith, eds., *Ethnic Segregation in Cities* (London, 1981) p25

²⁴⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* p331

²⁴⁸ Byron, *Post-war Caribbean migration to Britain: The Unfinished Cycle* p1; John Rex, 'Life in the Ghetto' in John Benyon and John Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest* (Oxford, 1987) p104

²⁴⁹ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* p350

not prejudiced, but that they had little choice - as letting to a black person would either drive business away or agitate their neighbours.²⁵⁰

Against this backcloth, Caribbean workers were often funnelled into what Rex describes as an 'illegitimate' housing market.²⁵¹ Generally, this market consisted of large and inner-urban Victorian terraced houses, which had been vacated during white suburbanisation (brought about by various post-war regeneration and modernisation programmes).²⁵² In short, in preparation for the apocalyptic strain that black immigration threatened, local authorities frequently granted concessions which enabled run-down neighbourhoods - which had been deemed uninhabitable - to fall *outside* of the jurisdiction of public health codes.²⁵³ This freedom enabled landlords to pack large numbers of immigrants into single houses.²⁵⁴ It also enabled the council to keep immigrants and the host community segregated.

Within this largely unregulated market, black workers often experienced bullying, extortion, exploitation, intimidation and violence at the hands of their landlords:

It was very hard. You rent a room, from a person this week, if he or she come and tell you that by next Friday they want the room, you have to get out (shrugging his shoulders)... No notice. They would put your things out on the street! ...Or if they tell you, "Go!" and you don't go, they change the lock! (Neville)

These typically inner-urban locales became known as 'twilight zones'.²⁵⁵ Rex and Tomlinson argue that this was both a reference to the decaying properties, and also to the 'violence and despair' with which these zones became synonymous.²⁵⁶ The majority of cities which housed substantial numbers of immigrant labourers had twilight zones. London, for example, had Stepney, Brixton and Notting Hill.²⁵⁷ Birmingham had

²⁵⁰ Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* Chapter V: 'The Postwar Years, 1945-71'

²⁵¹ Rex, 'Urban Segregation and Inner City Policy in Urban Britain' p26

²⁵² Deborah Philips, 'Black Minority Ethnic Concentration, Segregation and Dispersal in Britain' *Urban Studies* (35) 10 (1998) pp.1681- 1702 p1682

²⁵³ Rex, 'Urban Segregation and Inner City Policy in Urban Britain' p27

²⁵⁴ 'The West Indian Settlers: I - First Signs Of A British Colour Problem' *The Times* November 8, 1954

²⁵⁵ John Rex and Sally Tomlinson, *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* (London, 1979) p72

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* p236

Balsall Heath and Sparkbrook.²⁵⁸ Nottingham had St. Ann's. Leicester had the Meadebrooks. Quickly, the Meadebrooks area – like many of Britain's other black occupied twilight zones - became recognised as a 'black space' within the local white and black imagination.

The Meadebrooks space, however, possessed various unique features which, inevitably, impacted on the identity politics, community dynamics and general black experience in Leicester. Second-generation Antiguan participant, Darcy, explains that almost all the black workers in Meadebrooks, lived within approximately a "three mile radius: from Chester Road, Periton Road and Skeffington Road". The compact spatial dynamics of the Meadebrooks neighbourhood underpinned the eventual establishment of a tightly-knit and concentrated black community. In turn, resolute social networks and community ties which spanned across large sections of the community were soon established. Another feature of this particular neighbourhood was that significant numbers of black immigrants let their homes in their entirety "and in some cases bought them" (Darcy). These kinds of housing (and employment) opportunities and this 'intense' black presence contributed to varying degrees of inward migration and, in turn, a moderate growth in the size of the black community in Leicester throughout the following decade.

This apparent ghettoization in housing and employment in Leicester meant that black immigrants and the host community seldom shared the same public space or competed over the same resources during the early years of settlement, a situation which Singh, defines as 'parallel' existences.²⁵⁹ Or, put another way, 'coloured' immigration rarely encroached on – and was thus, largely absent from - mainstream Leicester throughout much of 1950s. This is not to suggest that during this period public spaces were *never* shared or co-occupied, just *seldom* shared. This was, however, a temporary situation.

²⁵⁸ See 'Mr. Manley Pays Visit To Birmingham: "Colour Problem Does Not Solve Itself"' *The Times* September 16, 1958 and Rex and Tomlinson, *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* p72, respectively.

²⁵⁹ Gurparal Singh, 'Multiculturalism in Contemporary Britain: Reflections on the "Leicester Model"' *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (5) 1 (2003) pp.40-55 p41

Immigration and Leicester c1960-1970: From an ethnic-friendly city to a racially hostile place

Just days after the 1958 ‘race riots’ in London and Nottingham *the Mercury* described Leicester as an ‘ethnic friendly city’ where its ‘coloured people are accepted...’²⁶⁰ As discussed, this supposedly ‘harmonious’ situation was arguably as much to do with an absence of signs of immigration from the city’s public spaces, as it was to do with successful integration. The following decade, however, witnessed what we might describe as Leicester’s tolerant and even ‘pro-immigration’ mood, shifting to one which was increasingly - and openly - anti-immigration, particularly at the ground level.

This shift is neatly captured in the contrasting stories contained within the *Leicester Mercury*’s ‘Review of the decade’ articles, published in 1960 and in 1970. The 1960 article’s sole criticism of the 1950s was the increase in motor traffic.²⁶¹ Not once did journalist, David Robinson make reference – positive or negative, past or present – to the city’s post-war ‘coloured’ immigrant communities. By contrast, William Kidd’s article – a decade later - placed the (poor) planning of the city’s regeneration programmes, as the only issue ‘more dangerous to...[Leicester’s] good health’ than the ‘racial problems arising out of immigration from overseas’.²⁶² This leaves us with an obvious but pertinent question: What factors underpinned this change in perception?

Sagar suggests that after World War Two, many parliamentarians avoided citing apprehensions which directly coalesced around issues of race and racial preservation.²⁶³ Solomos, however, observes that by the end of the 1950s this situation changed. He argues that the violent clashes between Teddy boys and black youth in Nottingham and Notting Hill in the summer of 1958 can be seen as a ‘watershed moment’ in political history.²⁶⁴ In many ways this event shifted the issue of ‘coloured’ immigration at the

²⁶⁰ ‘Race Riots are not likely in Leicester: Coloured People Are Accepted Here’ *Leicester Mercury* August 28, 1958

²⁶¹ David Robinson, ‘Goodbye to the fifties. Hello to the soaring sixties’ *Leicester Mercury* January 1, 1960

²⁶² cited in Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present Volume 2: Modern City* p99

²⁶³ Shamit Sagar, ‘Race Relations’ in Jonathan Hollowell, eds., *Britain since 1945* (London, 2003) p313

²⁶⁴ John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain (3rd ed.)* (Basingstoke, 2003) p54

national level, from a 'loose concern' to a coherent matter of Government response.²⁶⁵ Sagar describes this as a 'new phase' of the immigration debate.²⁶⁶ This new phase of the immigration debate in *Leicester* was also influenced largely, by processes of 'Africanisation' in East Africa. This episode resulted in the creation of thousands of Commonwealth refugees.²⁶⁷

I suppose it is to some degree ironic that it was the racist and nationalistic strategies enacted by 'black' governments in East Africa, which set in motion developments that helped shift the city of Leicester from an 'ethnic-friendly city' to one which increasingly embraced the racist rhetoric of the far-right. Throughout the 1960s (and early 1970s) African born Indians fled East Africa. As Commonwealth citizens, a sizable proportion of these took refuge in Britain. Between 1965 and 1967, for example, Britain's East African population grew from 6,000 to 31,600.²⁶⁸ With the exception of London, Leicester received the highest concentration of East African Indians. Herbert argues that with its accessible labour market, affordable housing, established South Asian communities, and its reputation as an 'ethnic friendly' city, Leicester was seen as an ideal destination.²⁶⁹

This, alongside inward migration and immigrants rushing to relocate to Britain before its government implemented various anti-immigration legislation, inevitably, resulted in a growth in Leicester's immigrant population during this decade (according to Nash et al, Leicester's Commonwealth population grew from 4,624 in 1961, to 26,419 in 1971)²⁷⁰ In turn, this swell undoubtedly brought about a number of key changes in the city: greater 'coloured' visibility; more frequent instances of shared public space; and more competition for scarce resources.

In addition to the immigrants' alleged encroachment into local territories and resources which whites perceived as theirs by right, locals also increasingly complained about the

²⁶⁵ Sagar, 'Race Relations' p313

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* p315

²⁶⁸ Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* p17

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p20

²⁷⁰ Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational' p187

new arrivals' 'alien culture';²⁷¹ the inability of some immigrants to speak English (or to speak English 'properly'); their alleged lack of hygiene; and the 'abnormally' large sizes of their families.²⁷² Such issues quickly conflated into a generic opposition to black immigration, and towards *all* of Leicester's already established 'coloured' communities.

By the second half of the decade, 'resistance to immigration', 'preservation of culture' and 'the need to ring-fence resources' were popular local rhetorics endorsed and rehearsed by the local media and by people who occupied all levels of Leicester society. On some occasions, they were also endorsed by those within the community who were supposed to be ideologically predisposed to promote tolerance and humanity. In 1968, for example, local Reverend A. J. Day, sought to clear the conscience of any people within his congregation who doubted the morality of their ethnic intolerance. Day assured them:

[O]ur conscience should be clear. We owe these people nothing and we have the perfect right to refuse to create conditions in which... native Britons would be unhappy and under which racial violence could flare up. We are sorry for people... but we have no liability to turn our country in to a refugee camp and to prejudice our future safety... [I]t is in the interests of the coloured people and of preventing racial conflict in Britain, such as we see in the United States, there must be strict [immigration] control... The majority of those who come to our country fall below our standards of education, responsibility and simple hygiene and the result is [that] they place a burden on the educational and welfare service...²⁷³

Days after the *Mercury* published Reverend Day's account, West Midlands Conservative MP Enoch Powell was removed from the Shadow Cabinet for his infamous 'Rivers of blood' speech. The support for Powell expressed by sections of the *Mercury*'s readership provides a useful indication of the levels of local anxiety and ill-feeling which now coalesced around the 'immigration issue.' Over a two-day period the *Mercury* published 24 letters from those which had been received in response to Powell's removal from the shadow cabinet. The following were typical examples:

²⁷¹ Letter from Mr. R Luck, 'Your Page Four' *Leicester Mercury* April 28, 1968

²⁷² 'Vicar: We Don't Owe the Immigrants Anything' *Leicester Mercury* April 17, 1968

²⁷³ Ibid.

Although Mr. Enoch Powell has voiced his opinions at an awkward time, he has the courage of his convictions and shows a deep concern for ... our county and our people. He has to my mind great foresight, as had Winston Churchill... I believe Mr. Powell is the kind of leader the British need. (Mrs. L Gadsby)²⁷⁴

IF A NATIONAL POLL was taken now, I believe 90 percent of the people would stand solidly behind Mr. Enoch Powell after his great speech.... This anti British Government and some members of the church in high places are completely out of touch with the mood of the people; they have for too long adopted a “policy of appeasement” and we know what happened when Neville Chamberlin tried that with Hitler in 1933. (T.R from Wigston)²⁷⁵

In the opinion of most, Mr. Powell should be knighted ...for his courage... (A.E.S)²⁷⁶

Of 24 letters printed between April 23 and 24 1968, only three *were not* in support of Powell. Although only a ‘snapshot’, the overwhelming majority of anti-immigration responses - or the editor’s decision to publish an overwhelming number of anti-immigration responses - suggests that by 1968, ‘immigration’ had become a bi-word for ‘problem’ within much of white and local imagination. A situation which, in part, led Simmons to conclude that the 1960s (and 1970s) was a period when Leicester’s black immigrants ‘were not treated with any warmth’.²⁷⁷

During this decade Leicester’s Caribbean community had also expanded through processes of inward African-Caribbean migration and via the arrival of more people from ‘back home.’²⁷⁸ The latter group was largely made up of the immigrant workers’ children. Once the Caribbean immigrants realised that their stay in Britain was going to exceed the original five-year plan, many parents sent for their children, who they had originally left back in the Caribbean. These new, young arrivals were the second-

²⁷⁴ ‘Your Page Four’ *Leicester Mercury* April 23, 1968

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. April 24, 1968

²⁷⁷ Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present Volume 2: Modern City* p106

²⁷⁸ When placed within the context of the growth of all the commonwealth immigrant communities in Leicester, the Caribbean community as a percentage in fact shrunk during this decade. In 1966, for example, African-Caribbeans made up approximately 25% of the entire immigrant community in Leicester. By 1971 this figure had shrunk to 12%, despite a rise in the actual number of Caribbeans living in Leicester. See Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present Volume 2: Modern City* p104

generation of African-Caribbeans. Not only did the young newcomers find themselves having to adapt quickly to an alien culture, they also had to cope with growing up within what was, by the end of the decade, a racially hostile city.

Concluding comments

The chapter began by sketching out immigration patterns to Britain during the last century, and placing the arrival of the black workers from the Caribbean within what we described as this ‘larger picture’. The chapter covered the complex range of reasons which underpinned the decision for this group’s arrival during the post-war period. For Britain, however, the conditions which demanded that it pull thousands of workers in from the Caribbean (and workers from all seven continents more widely) coalesced predominantly around needs to replace a ‘native’ workforce which had been severely depleted by World War Two. A lack of manpower combined with an established hosiery/lace trade, an established engineering industry, and a burgeoning light services industry were central factors in the emergence of various visible ‘black’ communities within the (East) Midlands region during the immediate post-war period.

Attention then turned to sketching out the identity politics of the first-generation of black Caribbeans. Initially the chapter shows how the term ‘black community’ as a blanket descriptor for the black workers, was in many ways a misleading one. In simple terms, the workers from the Caribbean were fractured along lines of nationality, class and complexion. As will be discussed later, the black experience in Britain – particularly during the initial decades of settlement - was arguably about black people integrating with other black people, as much as it was about black workers being somehow incorporated into white Britain.

The wider black experience in post-war Britain was characterised by a social, employment and housing ghettoization. Arguably, it was attempts to keep the local white and Britain’s newly emerging black population separate, typically led by local authorities across Britain, which helped funnel Leicester’s black workers into the centrally located Meadebrook’s neighbourhood during the second half of the 1950s –

and also facilitated the re-construction of the Meadebrook's area into a 'black space' within the wider Leicester imagination.

This sequestration was read by some within the city, as Leicester's successful race-relations management - and evidence of Leicester as an 'ethnic friendly city'.²⁷⁹ However, new processes of inward migration underpinned a noteworthy increase in Leicester's aggregate ethnic community during the following decade. The black community's resultant overspill into previously exclusive white spaces, alongside its alleged increasing threat to local resources, appeared to provide some of the catalyst for a change in mood towards immigration at all levels of Leicester society. Leicester shifted from an 'ethnic-friendly' space to a most hostile of places for new arrivals. Processes of inward-migration had undoubtedly impacted on the growth of the local African-Caribbean community in Leicester. However, the swell of the black community during this decade was also caused by the arrival of the children of the black workers, who had sent for them – once they realised were staying in Britain for longer than they had initially planned.

Panayi argues that all immigrant communities in Britain experienced exclusion and racism.²⁸⁰ It is evident, however, that racism has been a more permanent feature of the black experience when compared to the experience of many of Britain's other immigrant communities – particularly Britain's 'white' immigrant communities. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated if we contrast the experiences of first-generation white immigrants with that of subsequent generations. With the exception of their children's (sur) names, their foreignness is less noticeable – even at times, invisible. The second-generation of black Caribbeans which emerged during the 1960s, however, were as black – and thus as noticeably foreign - as their parents. In turn, their experiences of racial exclusion would, in many ways, be equally as potent.

But there were also noticeable generational differences in the black experience, particularly with regards to the construction of social and cultural identities. For example: they were the first-generation who would be both culturally Caribbean and

²⁷⁹ 'Race Riots Are Not Likely in Leicester: Coloured People Are Accepted Here' *Leicester Mercury* August 28, 1958

²⁸⁰ Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945*

directly British; they operated in different social spaces to their parents; as adolescents growing up in Britain, they had different experiences and needs, which in turn required a different set of local provisions. This last point was exacerbated by the fact that the issue of *provision* for black immigrant youth was one which had been largely overlooked by government and by local authorities. Both these bodies had been slow to realise that immigration was now a long term issue; slow to realise that immigration provision needed to extend beyond employment and housing; and slow to devise a coherent strategy of how best to aid (second-generation) black youth.

Against this complex back drop, two obvious but pertinent questions emerge: In what ways did the young second-generation black immigrants in Leicester form, manage and express their distinctive and arguably, culturally hyphenated Caribbean-British identities? And what strategies did Leicester's immigrant youth from the Caribbean, employ to circumvent a lack of local youth provisions, and to circumvent wider and more general processes of racial exclusion in Leicester? These questions set the parameters for the following chapter, which addresses the origins of the Meadebrook Cavaliers football club.

Chapter 4

Finding their Feet

Grass-roots football, Meadebrook Cavaliers and the second-generation black experience in Leicester

Introduction

There have been some notable recent academic insights within the wider area of BAME communities and non-professional sport which have not been applied to the narrower context of African-Caribbeans. Unlike work devoted to the South-Asian and football connection, for example, investigations explicitly into the role of local football as a means of expressing identity differences between different generations of African-Caribbeans are difficult to trace. Furthermore, since C.L.R James's famous paper, '*All The World's A Stage: The Light and the Dark*', seldom have sociologists or historians engaged with issues of intra-racial divisions using the prism of sport.²⁸¹ Consequently, little is currently known about the ways in which local football helped to displace older, and create newer, intra-racial divisions within the African-Caribbean consciousness in Britain.

Accordingly, the intention of this chapter is to explore what the decision to play football and in turn, to create Meadebrook Cavaliers, tells us about the identity politics of this particular generation of black youth in Leicester, especially during the period 1960-1979. In what ways did Leicester's racially hostile sporting terrain impact on the Cavaliers teams' performances, beyond motivation or resistance?²⁸² I also want to explore the ways in which the dynamics of the Cavaliers space helped foster a newly emerging sense of a specific type of African-Caribbean identity in Leicester.

²⁸¹ C.L.R James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London, 1963)

²⁸² Ernest Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen* (London, 1982); Ben Carrington, 'Sport, Masculinity, and Black Cultural Resistance' *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, (22) 3 (1998) pp.275-298

To achieve this, the chapter is broken down into four thematic sections: on identity, space and local football; on racial exclusion and the dominance of Cavaliers; on football, style and black identity politics; and on the issue of local football and black identity homogenisation. I acknowledge that this will no doubt obscure somewhat the precise chronology of events. However, this approach is necessary to maintain the central thesis. Before I begin, by way of context, it is necessary, firstly, to say something about the wider social, political and sporting terrain in which the origins of Meadebrook Cavaliers were couched.

In what follows, I have defined a football ‘team’ as an organisation which may exhibit a structure and/or administrators such as, a treasurer, chairman, secretary etc., but does not possess its own ground or facilities (permanently). Subsequently, I have defined a football ‘club’ as an organisation which, in addition to those elements outlined above, possesses its own material space and facilities. While, using the rather limiting term ‘team’ to describe the Cavaliers organisation during this period may at times be misleading, the importance of this distinction becomes apparent in the following chapter, which covers Cavaliers’ evolution from a parks team into a local football *club*.

Context

Black Mobilisation in Britain c.1930-1970

Similar to the experience of other migrant groups in Britain, Rex has noted that the black experience in the UK during this period was largely characterised by exclusion, prejudice and racial discrimination.²⁸³ Influenced by the African American organisation, the *National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People*, the mobilisation of ‘black’ groups - as a response to racial discrimination in Britain - first emerged during the interwar period. The first formation, according to Kimber, was the *League of Coloured People* in 1931.²⁸⁴ The post-World War Two labour shortage had, in part, prompted a notable increase in the number of African-Caribbean workers in Britain (see *Chapter 2*). The resultant moral panic within the host community contributed to the

²⁸³ Jon Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass* (Aldershot, 1988)

²⁸⁴ Nick Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’ in Pat Thane, eds., *Unequal Britain* (London, 2010) p32

erection of various informal barricades in the British employment and housing spheres.²⁸⁵ The Political and Economic Planning Report, *Racial Discrimination in England* (1967) described the levels of racial discrimination, bullying and harassment experienced by black immigrant workers within these two arenas in particular, as ‘varying from the massive to the substantial.’²⁸⁶ Kimber adds that racial discrimination and exclusion in England also took place within leisure spaces, such as pubs and dance halls.²⁸⁷ The black experience was also defined by violent attacks by local whites and by the police, which in some instances led to black fatality.²⁸⁸

Against this, resistance in the form of Caribbean immigrant mobilisation and activism gathered pace during the latter years of the 1950s and throughout the 1960s, with the formation of groups such as, *the West Indian Standing Committee* and the *Campaign Against Racial Discrimination* in 1958 and 1964, respectively.²⁸⁹ Black mobilisation in Britain during this period was again influenced by black political mobilisation in the United States. This time, however, it was inspired by the black civil rights movement.²⁹⁰ Against similar experiences of racial discrimination locally, various Caribbean organisations also emerged in the city of Leicester during the post-World War Two period.²⁹¹ The Caribbean island divisions, which shaped much of the identity politics of the first-second-generation of black settlers in Leicester, were present within many of these mobilisations. For example, *the Nevis Development Association*, *the Barbuda Social Group*, *the Jamaican Community Service Group* and *the Jamaican Community Service Group Newspaper*.²⁹²

²⁸⁵ Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black people in Britain* (London, 1991); Winston James and Clive Harris ‘Introduction’ in Winston James and Clive Harris, eds., *Inside Babylon* (London, 1993); Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London, 2006)

²⁸⁶ cited in Martin Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* (London, 1998) p142

²⁸⁷ Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’ p33

²⁸⁸ Ian Thompson, ‘Here to Stay’ *The Guardian* August 29, 2009; Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’

²⁸⁹ Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’ p34

²⁹⁰ Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’

²⁹¹ Lorna Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority* (Aldershot, 2000)

²⁹² Select Committee on Race Relations & Immigration, *Session 1975-76, The West Indian Community: Minutes of evidence; Thursday, 4th December, 1975, Leicester United Caribbean Association, West Indian Organisation Co-ordinate Committee* p10

Throughout this period, various attempts had been made by the black community in Leicester to establish a more unified body to harbour the various separate local black organisations. Initially, these attempts were largely unsuccessful. This was due, in part, to a combination of their ‘differing interests, different philosophies and a lack of [a] sufficiently strong’ motivation to bring the various and often polarised organisations together.²⁹³ The 1970s, however, brought a period of high unemployment to the city.²⁹⁴ The effects of unemployment were more severe for those within Leicester’s black community.²⁹⁵ It was largely this situation which prompted the different black groups within the city to recognise the need for a unified and stronger local black organisation. Subsequently, in 1974 the *Leicester United Caribbean Association* (LUCA) was formed. As a body LUCA represented 15 separate Caribbean groups and over 600 local Caribbeans.²⁹⁶ LUCA described itself as an ‘umbrella organisation’ whose purpose was to be a body ‘capable of facing up to and overcoming the problems of the Caribbean community in the Leicester society’.²⁹⁷

In an attempt to tackle unemployment and its impact on local black youth, on December 4, 1975, LUCA presented its *Five Year Community Project* to a Select Committee on Race Relations & Immigration. LUCA specifically identified young African-Caribbean males as the group that was worst affected by unemployment and subsequently most likely to be - or likely to become - socially disaffected. LUCA asserted that young black men needed to be installed with a ‘sense of personal identity’ which would enable them to ‘feel confident and secure in the community at large’.²⁹⁸ It was, however, a collective mobilisation undertaken by black youth in response to exclusions and discriminations taking place in spheres beyond employment, which would best elicit this sense of personal identity within many of the city’s young black men. However, this mobilisation raises one other obvious question: What were the unifying experiences of black youth in Leicester which helped to facilitate this development? To address this

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. also see Robin McCron et al, *Local Broadcasting for the Young Unemployed* (Leicester, 1980); Graham Swain, ‘Chairperson’s Report’ *B1 Annual Report 1980/81*

²⁹⁵ Select Committee on Race Relations & Immigration, *Session 1975-76, The West Indian Community: Minutes of evidence; Thursday, 4th December, 1975, Leicester United Caribbean Association, West Indian Organisation Co-ordinate Committee*

²⁹⁶ Ibid. p10

²⁹⁷ Ibid. p9-10

²⁹⁸ Ibid. p10

question we must first locate the experiences of local black youth within the wider context of youth politics and the British state during the post war period.

Teenage delinquency and the role of sport c.1950-1970

The inter-war years and then, the immediate post-World War Two period, witnessed the arrival in Britain of an increasingly mobile, affluent and independent working-class youth.²⁹⁹ Alongside talk of the newly emergent ‘teenager’, another discourse which connected young working class men and delinquency became increasingly prominent within the British imagination.³⁰⁰ Thus, by the end of the 1950s, managing working class youth ‘was one of the issues of the day’.³⁰¹ Various historians have noted that this issue became more urgent with the imminent end of conscription and the potential ‘socialisation-void’ it threatened to leave for British youth.³⁰² Against this, public authorities and politicians increasingly adopted the established public school position on sport, viewing organised games as an alternative method via which to instil youth with qualities such as ‘self-discipline and determination.’³⁰³

In 1957, the Central Council of Physical Recreation commissioned an independent committee led by Lord Wolfenden to ‘examine the general position of sport’ in England and to ‘recommend what action should be taken ...if games, sports and outdoor activities were to play their full part in promoting the general welfare of the community.’³⁰⁴ Like the Albermale Report (1960), the resultant Wolfenden Report (1960) highlighted a ‘gap’ in sport accessibility for those generally aged between 14-20

²⁹⁹ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States c.1958-1974* (Oxford, 1998); Jeff Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 2002)

³⁰⁰ Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good 1956-63: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* Chapter 12: ‘The Teenage Consumer’

³⁰¹ Ibid. p434

³⁰² Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States c. 1958-1974*; Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945*

³⁰³ Sport and the Community: The Report of The Wolfenden Committee – 1960 http://www.sportdevelopment.info/index.php?option=com_attachments&task=download&id=375 (accessed on: 13.12.2011) p8

³⁰⁴ Ibid. p4

or school leavers.³⁰⁵ This was argued to be the result of two processes; firstly, that post-education sporting provision was provided predominantly by voluntary sports organisations; and secondly, a general unwillingness among many voluntary sports organisations to include large numbers of youth in their activities. Often, this was because of popular perceptions that young people were ‘immature, unreliable, and even destructive.’³⁰⁶ The report’s recommendations appeared to legitimate growing grass-roots and political concerns surrounding teenagers and delinquency. It claimed, for example, that it was this demographic who, without the distraction offered by sport, were most inclined to become involved in deviant behaviour: ‘[I]t is a reasonable assumption that if more young people had opportunities for playing games fewer of them would develop criminal habits.’³⁰⁷ In part as a response to the recommendations offered by these investigations at the national level, public sport provision for teenagers and school leavers from the 1960s onwards increased.³⁰⁸

Leicester, sport and the Youth Service: “A club town”

The city of Leicester’s tradition of voluntary sporting associations dates back beyond the previous century. The first reference of club cricket in Leicester is dated at 1774.³⁰⁹ The first Working Men’s club opened on Belgrave Gate in 1881, and by 1899 it was reported to have 1800 members.³¹⁰ Leicester Tigers Rugby Football Club was formed in 1880 and Leicester Fosse (now City) Football Club was formed in 1884. Two years

³⁰⁵ Ibid. Chapter 3: ‘Some Special Factors and Problems Examined; (a) ‘The Gap’’

Also see Bernard Davies, *A History of the Youth Service Volume 1 1939-1979: From Voluntaryism to Welfare State* (Leicester, 1999) Chapter 2: ‘The Albermale Report: A new Beginning’

³⁰⁶ Ibid. p25

³⁰⁷ Ibid. p7

³⁰⁸ Polley argues that the increase in state funding for youth sport during this period was also a part of a strategy aimed to resurrect elite British sport, especially after England’s football team suffered a heavy defeat to Hungary in 1953 and 1954, and after Britain’s Olympic team bought back one gold medal from the 1952 Olympic games. See Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* p18

³⁰⁹ Leicestershireccc.co.uk, ‘Leicestershire County Cricket Club – History’ <http://www.leicestershireccc.co.uk/lc/Club/History> (accessed on: 10.4.2010)

³¹⁰ David Nash et al, ‘Organizational and Associational life’ in David Nash and David Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Gloucester, 1993) p175

later, the Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association was established.³¹¹ Under its auspices, within two decades the Leicester City Football League (1897), the Leicester & District Mutual League (1900) and the Leicestershire Senior League (1903) were all formed.³¹² After the Second World War, the number of local football leagues in the city expanded. During the period between 1958 and 1978, five more local football leagues were established within the city.³¹³ Leicester's sporting traditions had prompted The Working Men's Club and Institute union secretary, to describe the city as a 'club town' nearly half a century earlier.³¹⁴ However, similarly to the national picture described in the Wolfenden report, prior to the 1960s leisure and sport in Leicester was accessed, in the main, either by children in school or by adults associated with one of the city's host of private clubs.

Davies describes the 1960s as a 'golden age' for the British Youth Service.³¹⁵ This was the decade when the service experienced a 'steady and sometimes heady expansion' which, crudely, meant 'more money, buildings and equipment'.³¹⁶ From 1959/60 to 1964/65, the state's annual revenue expenditure on the Youth Service rose from £2.25 million to £8 million. Capital expenditure rose from £200,000 in 1961 to £17 million in 1965. During this time, local authorities doubled their budgets for the Youth Service to £6.5 million.³¹⁷ Locally, Leicestershire's revenue expenditure on the service during this period rose from £19,000 to £50,000. Unsurprisingly, that year's edition of the Leicestershire Youth Service handbook explained to its school leavers, that they could continue to 'do the [sporting] things you like doing with people like yourself...'³¹⁸

Like many other voluntary organisations, youth organisations were often spaces where racial intolerance and anti-immigration political activism was widely exercised, both

³¹¹ Leicestershire FA.com, <http://www.leicestershirefa.com/AboutUs/>

³¹² John Williams, '“Cavaliers is a Black Club”: Race, Identity and Local Football in England' in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (Aldershot, 1994) p156

³¹³ Ibid

³¹⁴ Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational life' p177

³¹⁵ Davies, *A History of the Youth Service Volume 1 1939-1979: From Voluntarism to Welfare State* p57

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid. p58

³¹⁸ *Leicestershire Youth Service Handbook 1965-66* (County of Leicester Education Department) p5

overtly and covertly. Davies notes that one boys' club in Smethwick, prior to the 1964 by-elections, had its young members walking around the local streets chanting the local Tory party's slogan; "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour."³¹⁹ Additionally, many youth provisions had 'whites only' policies.³²⁰ With many of the youth organisations being founded during the high point of the British Empire, many remained embedded within discourses of white male supremacy.³²¹ Thus, even those organisations where racial discrimination was not overtly practiced, still frequently organised events which ridiculed the city's black children. During a local church carnival procession in the mid-1950s, for example, the Fairfield Road Youth Club from Market Harborough in Leicestershire 'blackened-up' its young musicians as minstrels.³²² Furthermore, a photo of the blacked up musicians was published in the 1956/57 edition of the Leicester Youth Service Handbook to demonstrate the kind of 'fun' activities the county's cohort of youth organisations offered its school leavers (see figure 4.1.).

It was not until 1967 that the first centrally located - and more multi-cultural - youth centre appeared within the city. Thus, for the children of Leicester's imported African-Caribbean workers, who resided predominantly in inner-urban locales, there were very few accessible youth organisations available for them throughout most of the youth services so-called 'golden' decade. In other words, for local African-Caribbeans who left school before 1967 there were scarce opportunities for them to continue organised sporting activities with people like themselves.

The Youth Service and Leicester's immigrant school leavers c.1960-1970

According to Nash et al, Leicester's New Commonwealth population grew from 1,500 in 1951 to 4,624 in 1961.³²³ The Leicestershire Education Authority's decision to set up a special English class for immigrant children at Moat Boys' School in 1957, would suggest that the increase in the local New Commonwealth population was in part due to

³¹⁹ Davies, *A history of the Youth Service Volume 1 1939-1979: From Voluntaryism to Welfare State* p99

³²⁰ Ibid. p98

³²¹ Ibid. Chapter 4: 'Post-Albemarle; Aspirations - and Realities'

³²² *County of Leicester Youth Handbook 1956-57* (Birmingham) p33

³²³ Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational life' p177

the arrival of a significant number of children who were reuniting with their parents.³²⁴ Ascertaining how many black children arrived in Leicester between 1950 and 1966 is difficult. This is largely due to the fact that it was not until 1966 that the first count of immigrant children in Leicester's schools took place. That year Leicester's non-white immigrant children accounted for 6.2% of the total number on roll.³²⁵ African-Caribbean children accounted for 1.7% (758 pupils) of the total cohort.³²⁶ By 1974 the percentage of non-white immigrant children in Leicester's schools had grown to some 17.7%. This was largely due to the expulsion of Indian Africans from Uganda who then migrated to the English East Midlands.³²⁷ Children from the Caribbean accounted for 11% (617 pupils).³²⁸ By this point, Leicester had the largest number of non-white immigrants on roll outside of London.³²⁹

The apparent lack of youth provision for Britain's – and Leicester's – moderate but visible number of immigrant youth throughout the 1960s could be argued to be somewhat paradoxical. Gus John argues that during this period, the majority of white Britain saw young black men as dark strangers.³³⁰ This was both a reference to their skin colour and to the fact that within popular discourse black youth were viewed as a particularly problematic group.³³¹

Much of the lack of youth provision for BAME immigrant youth was due to a belated realisation by the British authorities that black immigration was going to be a long term issue, one which required provision for more than just adult workers.³³² Once this was realised, action was then delayed due to divided opinions on how best to deal with the rising number of immigrant youth.³³³ Professional and public opinion throughout the

³²⁴ John Mander, *Leicester Schools 1944-1974* (Leicester, 1980) p49

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ *City of Leicester Education Committee: Immigrant Pupils in Schools, January 1966; Summary of Information in Return Made by the Department of Education and Science*

³²⁷ Mander, *Leicester Schools 1944-1974* p49-50

³²⁸ Ibid. p50

³²⁹ Ibid. p49

³³⁰ Gus John, *In the Service of Black Youth: A Study of the Political Culture of Youth and Community Work with Black People in English Cities* (Leicester, 1983)

³³¹ Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority*

³³² Davies, *A History of the Youth Service Volume 1 1939-1979: From Voluntarism to Welfare State* Chapter 4: 'Post-Albemarle; Aspirations - and Realities'

³³³ Jim Agass, *The Meadebrooks Project 1967/69* (City of Leicester Education Committee, 1970)

1950s and 1960s was largely split between whether to provide black only provision, or whether to create multi-racial spaces which would also elicit ‘full integration between black immigrants and the host nation’.³³⁴ With no consensus about its importance, immigrant youth provision across Britain remained minimal throughout the 1960s. This situation changed in the aftermath of the Hunt Report on the *Immigrant and the Youth Service* (1967).³³⁵ From here on a more coherent strategy of integrating immigrant youth, in part through the youth service, emerged towards the end of the decade.³³⁶ In addition to this development, in October 1967 The Meadebrooks Project was launched in Leicester.³³⁷

The Meadebrooks Project was an after school youth centre hosted by the Brampton School on Dorset Road. Initially, the centre opened on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night and offered formal education classes in English, Social Studies, Physical Education and Crafts.³³⁸ In 1969, the centre’s membership consisted of 151 ‘West Indians’, 38 ‘English’, and 32 ‘Asians.’³³⁹ At the request of its attendees, by 1969, the centre’s provisions expanded to include a disco, weightlifting sessions, boxing lessons, a basketball team and 5-a-side football tournaments. To ensure the requested sport provisions were adequately delivered, the youth centre employed local Antiguan-born heavyweight boxer, Ricky Campbell, and an army youth basketball coach to run the boxing sessions and to manage the basketball team, respectively.³⁴⁰

The centre’s football provision had proved to be particularly popular among the male African-Caribbean attendees (who accounted for 58% of all attendees that year).³⁴¹ Project worker, Jim Agass, noted that football was played by almost all the African-Caribbean boys, including those who he described as the ‘less athletically endowed

³³⁴ Ibid. para.221

³³⁵ Agass, *The Meadebrooks Project 1967/69*

³³⁶ Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* Chapter 6: ‘Sport and Ethnicity’

³³⁷ For an in depth discussion on the Youth Service and black immigrant children during this period, see John, *In the Service of Black Youth: A Study of the Political Culture of Youth and Community Work with Black People in English Cities*, Chapter 3: ‘The Youth Service and Young Black People’

³³⁸ Agass, *The Meadebrooks Project 1967/69* para.8

³³⁹ Ibid. para.33

³⁴⁰ Ibid. para.92-93

³⁴¹ Ibid. para.33

West Indian[s]’.³⁴² However, for the more talented local black football players, and for those who desired to play the 11-a-side format, which they had been introduced to in the school playground and during PE lessons, the youth centre offered little.

Voluntary football clubs and immigrant youth in Leicester c.1960-1970

As far as I know, it [opportunities to play football] was just the Boys Brigade, School team and then play in the park amongst ourselves. (George, founding Cavaliers member and second-generation African-Caribbean)

In terms of... [football] you had to find it where you could... So we used to meet up after school on the park and we played football ... We never had proper pitches; there weren't proper goals. It was purely coats and jumpers to make the goals. (Bryan, founding Cavaliers member and second-generation African-Caribbean)

In 1967, the Meadebrooks area offered very few opportunities for sport beyond those provided by the local youth centre.³⁴³ Consequently, Plashet Park, the hemmed-in sole green space within the Meadebrooks area, was where most local black youth in Leicester played their weekend football. School leavers who wanted to play organised 11-a-side football, however, had to attempt to access Leicester's cohort of predominantly white and mainly working class local football clubs. As noted by both Alexander and Holland, during this period voluntary white working class spaces were typically anathema to (black) outsiders.³⁴⁴ Cohen adds that the kind of racism involved here was 'constitutive' of "The British way of life."³⁴⁵

³⁴² Ibid. para.102

³⁴³ Select Committee on Race Relations & Immigration, *Session 1975-76, The West Indian Community: Minutes of evidence; Thursday, 4th December, 1975, Leicester United Caribbean Association, West Indian Organisation Co-ordinate Committee* p7

³⁴⁴ Brian L Holland, 'Surviving Leisure Time Racism: The Burden of Racial Harassment on Britain's Black Footballers' *Leisure Studies* (16) 4 (1997) pp.261-277

³⁴⁵ cited in Sallie Westwood, 'Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space' in Jeff Hearn and David Morgan, eds., *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory* (London, 1990) p60

Syzamanski observes that traditionally, voluntary organisations were socially and politically considered to be sovereign entities, free from state surveillance.³⁴⁶ On this point Polley notes that many parliamentarians and sport organisations alike, viewed voluntary sport and sports clubs as essentially private spaces where political agencies ‘had no business’.³⁴⁷ This provides some context for the capacity of voluntary sports clubs to openly exclude individuals on the grounds of gender, age or race. The capacity to discriminate racially within these spaces was compounded by the weakness of anti-discrimination policies such as, the *Race Relations Act* (1965), which was focused solely on racism within the employment and housing spheres. Thus, local and voluntary white footballing organisations were spaces where articulations of overt white working class resistance to black immigration were freely expressed and exercised. As Burdsey points out:

[M]igrant groups from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean were believed to represent a threat to jobs, housing and the social cohesion of the nation. Social spheres, such as sport and leisure, were prime areas in which the subsequent racist backlash took place.³⁴⁸

From early player accounts, it appears that this narrative was also applicable to the black experience in Leicester during the 1960s:

The majority of our players felt that they hadn’t had the opportunity to explore football out of the Meadebrooks community... [All] of us played for the school teams [but were]... unsatisfied with what they were getting from the team. Starting Meadebrook Cavaliers was an opportunity to come together as a group of black people... representing the black community of Meadebrooks. A team essentially run for black people, by black people... Those were the ...driving forces.” (Bryan)

The reason why a lot of those guys had come together... [was] because they weren’t getting any opportunities. That’s how [Cavaliers]...was actually formed... (Adrian, ex-Cavaliers player and second-generation African-Caribbean)

³⁴⁶ Stefan Syzanski, ‘A Theory of the Evolution of Modern Sport’ *Journal of Sport History* (35) 1 (2008) pp.1-32

³⁴⁷ Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* p12

³⁴⁸ Daniel Burdsey, ‘Forgotten Fields? Centralizing the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Men’s Football Clubs in England’ *Soccer & Society* (10) 6 (2009) pp.704–721 p709

This backdrop of exclusion, in part, provided the catalyst for a number of local black teenagers to form their own football team, Meadebrook Cavaliers. For many of the young men who started Cavaliers, however, this mobilisation was almost exclusively about sport and not about ‘front line politics’.³⁴⁹ “We didn’t know that we were... challenging racism” (Hugh, founding Cavaliers member and second-generation African-Caribbean). Like most teenagers, Cavaliers’ cohort of adolescent players saw themselves as aspiring footballers and not as political activists. For Bryan, the widely acclaimed founder of the Cavaliers team, the distinction between Cavaliers and black front line political groups was unequivocal:

It started as a football club... because that’s what it was. There were other community organisations that was given funds to provide other community services and that was their responsibility ...We ...had no right [to get into politics]!

Whether intended or not, the creation of a platform whose fundamental objective was to circumvent and challenge a racialised status quo, is inevitably bound-up with the politics of identity and ‘race’ from its inception. I will now explore in the following two sections, the role of the Cavaliers team in the context of the politics of black youth identity, masculinity construction, and ‘race’ in Leicester.

Identity, space and local football: Getting Cavaliers started

In his work on the relationship between local football and the identity politics of recent generations of British Asians, Daniel Burdsey argues that through an engagement with football, modern Asian heritage youth are (re)constructing new forms of British Asian identity.³⁵⁰ These identities were markedly different from those of previous generations.³⁵¹ For the young African-Caribbean men in this current study, it is apparent that playing football and, in turn, the creation of their own local football team some 40 years ago, communicated a similar intergenerational fracture. The young black men’s

³⁴⁹ Williams, “‘Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ p167

³⁵⁰ Daniel Burdsey, “If I Ever Play Football, Dad, Can I Play for England or India?” *British Asians, Sport and Diasporic National Identities* *Sociology – Diasporic Identities* (40) 1 (2006) pp.11–28

³⁵¹ Ibid.

preferences for *England's* national sport over more 'traditional' Caribbean-based sports such as cricket, among others, signified their more complex African-Caribbean *and* British ethnic identities.³⁵²

[W]e used to go out and play football. We didn't go and play cricket... I can imagine in the West Indies they go over the park and play cricket [because]... [t]hat's what they're brought up with it. It's their national sport. Here it's all football... So that's what we did... (Everton, ex-Cavaliers player and second-generation African-Caribbean)

Football is *our* thing... (Adrian)

Our parents weren't interested in football... It was very much *our* thing. It was led and driven by my generation - the second-generation - that came here... [The first] generation didn't know about football. It wasn't in their system. They didn't like it. It was just seen as a younger generation thing. So we had to do it on our own. We hadn't the support of our parents in that respect... But we don't hold it against our parents, because they did the best they could and if it wasn't for them we wouldn't be here. (Bryan)

Being marooned in socially inhospitable jobs and often having to work overtime to afford to live in the UK and send money back home, often meant limited leisure time for the first-generation of black migrant workers in Britain. What brief leisure time workers from this generation could set aside for sport was often allocated to cricket. Pertinently, cricket was described by the second-generation respondents here as their parents' national sport or something which was their 'parents' thing.' Counterpoised to this, football was often viewed by first-generation African-Caribbeans as distinctly English (white), or as King argues, football was seen to be the 'white man's game'.³⁵³ Accordingly, their children's preference for football was often interpreted as an impasse between the two generations. Founder member Bryan also places such intergenerational

³⁵² Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities' in Ali Rattansi, and James Donald, eds., *Race, Culture and Difference* (London, 1992); Michael Banton, *Ethnic and Racial Consciousness* (2nd ed.) (London, 1997) Paul Gilroy, *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* (London, 2000); 'The Dialectics of Diaspora Identification' in Les Back and John Solomos, eds., *Theories of Race and Racism* (London, 2000); Virginia Lam and Gordon Smith, 'African and Caribbean Adolescents in Britain: Ethnic Identity and Britishness' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, (32) 7 (2009) pp.1248–1270

³⁵³ Colin King, 'Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game Inside Football' *Leisure Studies* (23) 1 (2004) pp.19-30

tensions as central factors behind the lack of interest and, in turn, lack of support for Meadebrook Cavaliers from the more established local black organisations in Leicester, such as LUCA:

[W]e didn't get the support because the people who ran LUCA were from that generation who didn't really like football; who didn't really understand and appreciate it. So we had to fend for ourselves. We had to do things for ourselves. We co-existed but there was no real support... I had 'run-ins' with the older people at LUCA. Quite bad ones and, you know, they were quite dismissive... We had some of the older folks come to watch us, a few, but from the established organisations like LUCA and ...[the]Community Service Group that was around at the time, they didn't support us at all.

Against this perspective, the only support for the Meadebrook Cavaliers team came from the Brampton Youth Centre. Leicester youth worker, Jim Agass, played a key role in initially getting the project off the ground; assisting with bureaucratic processes such as league registration and hiring a pitch. As with its other sport provisions offered, the youth centre employed a white school teacher, Ken Wolfe, to manage the team during its debut season in the Leicestershire Youth League in 1970. The other club formalities - quite alien to the young boys from the Caribbean - such as treasurer, player registration forms, chairman, secretary etc., had to be learned 'on the job', and often at some expense. One founding member explains: "I got the information to send the team to one pitch and I sent them to another about 5 or 6 miles away. We missed the match and probably lost the points."³⁵⁴ Contrary to club folklore, it was not until the second season that organising the Cavaliers team was officially taken on by Bryan, the most senior member of the group (although only by a couple a years).³⁵⁵

For these young black men, having a team which played in or near the Meadebrooks area appeared almost as significant as playing the game itself: '[T]here was a fantastic feeling of belonging because [Meadebrooks] was our community... Central Park was very special...' (Bryan). Westwood has highlighted how notions of local neighbourhood structures and an attachment to certain urban spaces were central facets within the

³⁵⁴ John Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* (Leicester, 1993) p35

³⁵⁵ Ibid. p 31

identity construction of black men in Leicester during the 1980s.³⁵⁶ Second-generation Antiguan born, Darcy's perhaps slightly embroidered account demonstrates the centrality of urban territory within earlier manifestations of black identity. For him, Plashet Park in the Meadebrooks was a central marker for the presence of a then newly emerging local black youth within the city. It was also a physical testament to their masculine superiority over competing local white groups:

There was a place called Plashet Park. Every time we got there, there were white kids that would chase us off. We were small in numbers. Ironically, as the shift changes we took that place over and they were the ones that were wary of us being there. We had to fight to get our place on that park. It seems silly now but it was, like, territorial.

Alongside city spaces such as parks and streets, Westwood also identifies local amateur football circles in Leicester as another significant - and hotly contested - neighbourhood territory within the local black and white imagination. She elucidates that local football can be viewed as a discursive space where ownership of territories are fought for, power relations resisted and black identities constructed.³⁵⁷

Importantly, Westwood's insights demonstrate that local black social and sporting identity formation takes place within a wider context.³⁵⁸ It is something which is formed through a myriad of contested discourses, in which neighbourhood and football are central features. This recognition also de-essentializes ideas of blackness in Leicester. It enables us to include factors such as, history, class and location within its construction.³⁵⁹ Williams has noted that performance was also fused within local black perceptions of sporting blackness.³⁶⁰ Blackness equated to playing 'Cavaliers' way'.³⁶¹ In short, to be a 'black team' within the local black imagination required more than a squad of players who were all the same colour. Having a black team located *outside* the

³⁵⁶ Westwood, 'Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space'; Also see Les Back, "Home From Home": Youth, Belonging and Place' in Claire Alexander and Caroline Knowles, eds., *Making Race Matter: Bodies, Space and Identity* (London, 2005)

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Lam and Smith, 'African and Caribbean adolescents in Britain: Ethnic identity and Britishness'

³⁵⁹ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London, 1987)

³⁶⁰ Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England' p172

³⁶¹ Ibid. p174

geographic confines of black Leicester for example, could call into question its validity as a black entity within this local black imagination.

This last issue threatened to halt this particular sporting mobilisation before it began. The only pitch offered the group of young men in time for them to participate in the 1970 season, was at Humberstone Park (approximately 4 miles outside of the Meadebrooks area). Set against the importance of location to the construction of local ideas of the black-self, the decision to accept – albeit reluctantly - a pitch *outside* the confines of the black community should not be underestimated. The team's resistance to playing at Humberstone Park, however, did not solely coalesce around issues of identity, community and belonging. Their objections were also rooted in the pragmatism of everyday matters of logistics and practicality.

The logistical obstacles faced by the young black men when attempting to travel the relatively short distance to Humberstone Park, returns our focus to this group's lack of support from the wider black community, and to their very limited access to resources. For the first two-years, with the exception of Bryan, the team was made up of 14-18 year old, working class, black teenagers who had little – if any - access to independent transport and only limited access to finance. Subsequently, accessing pitches which were beyond walking distance presented significant challenges for the group of young men. Obviously, such obstacles were exacerbated when it came to playing away matches outside the city. In these early years of formation the Meadebrooks-based Brampton Youth Centre again assisted by organising and providing transport for the team. Although the mode of transport acquired was occasionally unorthodox. For the Cavaliers' debut match away to Peckleton in East Leicestershire, the youth service had hired the team a double decker bus.³⁶²

By the time the original Cavaliers team had outgrown the under18s youth league at the end of the 1971/72 season, the decision to enter a Cavaliers team in an open-age league was relatively straightforward. As a parks-based team with no private facilities, Cavaliers could only approach the lowest levels of a number of city based leagues (According to various Cavaliers match programmes, this level of football was some ten divisions below the Leicestershire Senior League; see figure 4.2). Subsequently, they

³⁶² Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History*

applied to the *Leicester & District Mutual League*, and on August 21, 1972, were accepted into its lowest tier, Division 8.³⁶³ George describes the players' sentiments during the team's transition from youth football to an open aged competition:

[T]hat first year, we did all right... We were just finding our feet really ...We couldn't wait for the next year after the first season... and then you wanted to do it again the next year... So you wanna' go as high as possible. You know; prove yourself...

His final observation - that Cavaliers was a platform through which the players could prove a sporting point - draws our attention to the structures which had shaped their wider sporting experiences. Often these boundaries were underpinned by popular (mis)understandings of 'race' and a white hostility to sporting blackness. It is to further identify these sporting racisms and to sketch out their influences on the evolution of the Cavaliers team during this period that we now turn.

Racial exclusion and the dominance of Cavaliers: A symbiotic relationship?

[A] handful of coloured players are making their mark... each bringing their own colourful characteristics to the [English] game... The salient fact is that more and more sons of immigrant families ... may have been born and bred in this country, but will still bring special skills to the game. (*Football League Review* 1971/72)³⁶⁴

I am glad Clyde Best [professional black player] is doing so well. Now that skill is the all important factor he is in his element... (Peter Taylor, Assistant Manager, various professional clubs)³⁶⁵

King argues that the performance of black footballers is often removed from our understandings of cognition and intelligence and viewed solely as the result of their black physiology.³⁶⁶ The quotes above, taken from a well-respected white professional football (assistant) manager during the 1970s and from the *Football League Review* (1971/72), indicate that during our period of focus, depictions of British black footballers as exotic and hyper-physical were not only prevalent, but they were openly

³⁶³ Mutual League, *Autumn General Meeting minutes* August 21, 1972

³⁶⁴ The Football League Review 1971-72 p4

³⁶⁵ Ibid. p5

³⁶⁶ Colin King, 'Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game Inside Football'

expressed and widely endorsed throughout the English game.³⁶⁷ These pseudo-scientific assumptions that black footballers possess certain inherent sporting attributes directly impacted on the black experience within English football during this period.³⁶⁸ This was particularly the case with regard to the way blacks were ‘stacked’ on the pitch, and the extent to which black players were excluded from the game.³⁶⁹

Of course the black experience in English football also included an exposure to what we might describe as more overt forms of racism. Scholars such as Westwood, Williams, Lusted and Burdsey have all highlighted how discrimination was often the reaction towards black players and black teams by a ‘white’ Leicester, which included the opposition players, opposing fans, match officials, local media and the County Football Association.³⁷⁰ In early contests, when direct racism was experienced by the Cavaliers players, it was mostly in the form of verbal abuse from spectators.³⁷¹ Racial abuse on the field, however, often meant the culprits either received a beating in terms of the result of the game or occasionally a beating via the abused player’s bare hands.³⁷² Instances of overt racism no doubt spurred on Cavaliers’ players, adding another dimension of cultural resistance to the team’s games. However, I want to spend the rest of this section exploring how black *exclusion* from local league and professional football played a central role in the formation and establishment of the Cavaliers team, and subsequently facilitated Cavaliers’ ability to establish a powerful position in the local football landscape in Leicester.

Fleming notes that, historically, common-sense assumptions of black sportsmen as ‘naturally’ powerful, fast, instinctive and unintelligent have become fixed in popular

³⁶⁷ Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen*

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Joseph A Maguire, ‘Race and Position Assignment in English Soccer: A Preliminary Analysis of Ethnicity and Sport in Britain’ *Sociology of Sport Journal* (5) 3 (1988) pp.257-269

³⁷⁰ Westwood, ‘Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space’; Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History*; Williams, ‘‘Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’; Jim Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England* (PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2009); Burdsey, ‘Forgotten fields? Centralizing the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Men’s Football Clubs in England’

³⁷¹ also see Christian, ‘Mixing Up the Game’

³⁷² Williams, ‘‘Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’

British footballing discourse.³⁷³ We can add to this list that they were depicted as naturally lacking in qualities such as grit and determination and in the capacity to play in adverse weather conditions.³⁷⁴ As discussed in *Chapter 1*, various scholars have highlighted a relationship between the negative perceptions of sporting blackness, held by the game's (white) gatekeepers, and the informal exclusion of black (and Asian) players from the professional game.³⁷⁵

John Williams, however, points out that resistances to black players were/are more freely expressed and exercised within the less regulated and less monitored local league format of the game.³⁷⁶ Additionally, local league football clubs often possess closer relationships and more resilient identity ties with their local communities than their professional counterparts. In this regard, Carrington and MacDonald demonstrate that (local) sport and sports associations are invaluable spheres when analysing British expressions of nation, community and racism.³⁷⁷ Cohen adds that during periods of 'high' immigration, white working class communities frequently consider local jobs, schools and neighbourhoods to be white territories threatened by foreign invaders.³⁷⁸ Holland extends the boundaries of what Cohen describes as the 'nationalism of the neighbourhood' to include 'our' football ground, 'our' club and 'our' game'.³⁷⁹ During the period of post-World War Two immigration, a combination of a determination that white working class spaces and sports clubs should remain white, and a pervasive discourse which held black players to be sporting undesirables, helped facilitate the erection of potent barricades around professional and local league football clubs in the East Midlands and beyond.

³⁷³ Scott Fleming, 'Racial Science and South Asian and Black Physicality' in Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald, eds., *Race, Sport and British Society* (London, 2001)

³⁷⁴ See King, 'Play the White Man'; 'Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game Inside Football'; David Turner and Ian Jones, 'False start? UK Sprint Coaches and Black/White Stereotypes' *Journal of Black Studies* (38) 2 (2007) pp.155-176

³⁷⁵ Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen*;); Jas Bains and Sanjiev Johal, *Corner Flags and Corner Shops* (London, 1998)

³⁷⁶ Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England"

³⁷⁷ Carrington and McDonald, 'Introduction: Race, Sport and British Society'

³⁷⁸ cited in Holland, 'Surviving Leisure Time Racism: The Burden of Racial Harassment on Britain's Black Footballers' p264

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

These processes of exclusion were not always obvious. Black schoolboys in Leicester during the 1960s and early 1970s, for example, often found that they could access various professional football club schoolboy teams across the East Midlands. These players were exposed to more rigid forms of exclusion, however, when they reached the age of selection for a professional football apprenticeship or for a professional contract. Often white coaches would offer opaque explanations for the black players' failure to make the grade. Diminutive Ex-Cavaliers Club Captain, Adrian, for example, recalls that one frequently offered explanation was that the black player was 'too small to play professional football.' This was despite the released black player often being at least the same height as many white players operating within the professional sphere. As Cashmore points out, it wasn't enough for a black player to be as good as his white peers, if he wanted to become a professional footballer he had to be - at least - twice as good.³⁸⁰

The average white county, schoolboy or apprentice standard player, upon release from his professional football club usually gravitated to one of the larger local non-league clubs who operated at the national Conference (step 1) or Northern and Regional Leagues level (step 2-6). It was uncommon to find young local white players, who had demonstrated such sporting potential at school or youth level, playing their football below the Senior League level - *without a reason*. This, however, was not the case if the player concerned was black. High-calibre black players often found that the majority of semi-professional and grass-roots white clubs operated similar processes of exclusion found within professional clubs, or were spaces which were, simply, racially inhospitable. In other words, irrespective of ability, many black players found accessing elite non-professional clubs at least equally as difficult as accessing professional clubs.

This narrative of exclusion from the professional and elite amateur game characterised the sporting experiences of many of Cavaliers' talented and local black players, such as, Adrian, Everton, Junior and Celestine, who were all released as schoolboys or as apprentices either by Leicester City or Derby County.³⁸¹ Once released, high-calibre young black football players in Leicester usually had three realistic local sporting

³⁸⁰ Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen* p175

³⁸¹ *Meadebrook Cavaliers v Howell Sports FC* Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports and Social Club (Central Midland League Match) Match Programme August 13, 1988

options: give-up football; *attempt* to join the closed ranks of an elite non-professional white club; or join Meadebrook Cavaliers.³⁸² The overwhelming majority chose to join Cavaliers.

This pattern of racialised exclusion meant that, unlike the other park-based teams in the Mutual League, Cavaliers obtained the services of high quality local footballers - black players who, had they been white, would almost certainly have been playing at a much higher step on the non-league pyramid. In short, the processes of black exclusion in professional and elite local football meant that Cavaliers' adult team - unlike most other clubs operating at their level (and quite possibly up as far as the Senior League) - had access to a much better standard of footballer. According to one Cavaliers member, initially this situation often resulted in Cavaliers pitching their highly talented young footballers against teams with aging men who often possessed 'big beer bellies.'³⁸³

These processes of exclusion and the resultant 'funnelling' of high-calibre black players into Cavaliers meant the organisation became the primary local destination for black football talent. The creation, after one adult season, of an equally successful reserve team (in 1973/74) was evidence of its deepening pool of highly skilled players. This 'ring-fenced' superior football ability rapidly elevated both Cavaliers teams through the Mutual League. Between 1972 and 1979 the Cavaliers first team won consecutive promotions from the Mutual League Division 8 to its Premier Division (7 promotions in 6 seasons). The ease with which Cavaliers won the Division 8 title resulted in them being super-promoted to Division 5 the following season.³⁸⁴ Between 1973 and 1979, Cavaliers won 83 of their 124 matches, scoring 367 goals while conceding just 76. In their debut season in the Mutual League Premier Division in 1979/80, Cavaliers won the league and cup double, scoring 85, conceding 28, and losing just two games. Arguably, most fitting for those young black players determined to prove points, was the fact that the double was achieved against a back drop of what the Mutual League

³⁸² From the late 1970s onwards, local black players in Leicester also had the option to play for a number of other emerging BAME founded football teams in the local area, such as Highfield Dynamos (see Mutual League, *Autumn General Meeting minutes* August 20, 1979)

³⁸³ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p38

³⁸⁴ Win rate calculated from first-team games played between the 1973/74 and the 1977/78 seasons.

Secretary, Ivor Finn, described as the ‘worst winter to effect the league since 1963’.³⁸⁵ Cavaliers’ advantageous position of being the primary destination for otherwise excluded high-calibre black players, enabled its teams to dominate the Mutual League, winning the Premier Division six more times over the following seven seasons.

Playing ‘naturally’: Football, style and black identity politics

For many of the young Meadebrooks men who founded Cavaliers, equally as important as dominating local football and ascending through the football system (proving sporting points), was playing a brand of football which they perceived to be emblematic of their blackness:

I think it’s something black people bring to football, to the cricket as well. If you look at the difference between the English cricketers, and black players now who are playing for England... It is very difficult to explain; it’s just we like to do things with style.³⁸⁶

[P]eople from the Caribbean bring special qualities – pace, skill, and they like...to do a few flicks and all that. You can do the flicks and you may be going 10 yards back your way.³⁸⁷

The testimonies above, taken from two ex-Cavaliers players who participated in an oral history project in 1992, provide a useful introduction into the ways in which their performance and body-management while playing football – aka their football ‘style’ - was a key component within the identity politics of these young and second-generation black sportsmen.³⁸⁸ They suggest that how these young men played football was deeply embedded within their own reflexive black Caribbean consciousness. They also suggest that sporting performance was an important element within their wider constructions of self. Playing in this way was also central to expressing their black British identities as distinct from white British identity. Ironically, of course, it was also these sorts of

³⁸⁵ Ivor Finn, *Mutual League General Secretary’s notes* (1979)

³⁸⁶ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p77

³⁸⁷ Williams, ‘‘Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ p172-173

³⁸⁸ Gilroy, *There Ain’t no Black in the Union Jack*

prized, acculturated approaches to the game which often under-pinned the crude, essentialised racisms that were frequently aimed against them.

Once they arrived in England, most of these young men were introduced to football via the school playground and during PE lessons. Their football tutelage, however, largely took place within the ‘jumpers for goal posts’ nurtured ‘showman’ games on Plashet Park. One Cavaliers player explains that on the local green, skill, expression, trickery and ultimately making ‘people look silly and foolish ... was the name of the game’.³⁸⁹

It is something of a commonly cited truism that individuality, flamboyance and flair are elements which are ‘coached out’ of young players on their arrival into semi-professional and professional football. To whatever degree this may be accurate, it was not applicable to the majority of the black players here who, for the most part, were simply unable to access organised football at this level. Subsequently, the type of expressive football which they had learned as young boys playing on Plashet Park, in turn, characterised the style of football which they displayed as young men playing for Meadebrook Cavaliers:

You come to Cavaliers to enjoy yourself... A dribbler you’ve got to be... It’s exciting... We like to do things extra... how can I put it; it’s the way we are, bubbling.³⁹⁰

There has to be entertainment. You can win a game and our supporters will be moaning ... they want to see different things, people taking players on, dribbling, the unexpected ... what they might not see ... in a normal English game...³⁹¹

The ex-players’ reference to Cavaliers’ football as different from ‘normal’ - aka white - English football points to an endorsement of a particular sporting mythology that existed within the team – one which held black and white athletes to be inherently different. Despite various high profile white players and white professional clubs during this period (especially on the continent) employing a more expressive style of play,

³⁸⁹ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p23

³⁹⁰ Ibid. p75-76

³⁹¹ Ibid. p76-77

many of Cavaliers' players maintained that as black people, they were culturally and physiologically 'different' to white players:

It's just we were just a different species. We were just superior to be honest... the running was easy to us, the keep fit was easy! ...Physically it was easy for us." (Hugh)

Funnily enough, we all believed that we had certain skills that white people didn't have, and we believed that throughout the team.³⁹²

It's hard to pinpoint where this approach comes from, but I think it's a lot to do with lifestyle, the culture you're brought up into. Expression is a natural thing for black people... We like to express and I think that is what happens when we play football... I think that is the difference between black teams and white teams.³⁹³

This perceived to be expressive style of football quickly formed a core component of these young men's black sporting identity construction.³⁹⁴ Within their black cultural imagination, opposing the expressive and improvised black footballer was the reserved and rigid white footballer. Subsequently, Cavaliers players frequently referred to white football and white clubs as 'programmed' and white players as 'robots'.³⁹⁵

Cavaliers had never formally employed a 'blacks only' policy, as Hugh explains: "[W]e didn't repeat the racism." From its inception, Cavaliers' teams have always included a few non-black players (the conditions of player inclusion are explored in greater detail in *Chapter 5*). Interestingly, Cavaliers' few non-black players described the team's black style of football as markedly different from what they also perceived to be a more restrictive English game – and culture. As one early white Cavaliers player explains:

To play for Cavaliers as a white player is definitely different, exciting... It was certainly different, a different style of play... It [is] a different style of play... Cavaliers players... relied on a lot of natural ability, skill, speed, quickness of thought... But what that led to were some totally outrageous situations, play-wise. Some things, if you saw them on a coaching video, you'd say, 'No!', but if you

³⁹² Ibid. p81

³⁹³ Ibid. p80

³⁹⁴ Westwood, 'Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space'; Williams, "Cavaliers is a Black Club": Race, Identity and Local Football in England'

³⁹⁵ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p77

saw it done by Brazil or an international footballer you'd say, 'What a fantastic piece of skill!'³⁹⁶

The explicit reference to Cavaliers' 'style' as something which was anathema to the football philosophies adopted by many white English coaches is pertinent. As discussed previously, various scholars have argued that English coaches during this period placed little value on skill and inventiveness: the traits commonly associated with black footballers (see *Chapter 1*). Within the white cultural imagination, the perceived to be 'racialised' attributes of black players were seen as being trumped by white footballers, who would show their 'inherent' superior grit and determination. The necessary attributes to win matches in *English* football.³⁹⁷

These kinds of sentiments are clearly present within an article taken from *The Annual Football Review* (1971/72): '...many coloured players ...have tried but.... [t]he fierce competitiveness of the English game ...prove[s] an insurmountable barrier.'³⁹⁸ This provides a useful reminder of the kinds of, then commonly held, negative perceptions of black footballers and black football within the professional and in turn, elite local league game. They also provide some context for Cavaliers' belief that their football style – as well as their presence in Britain - was a direct challenge to local white football. One ex-Cavaliers player explains that beating a white team, while playing their non-mainstream brand of football, was more important to some of these young black men than winning points or progressing to the next round of an arbitrary cup competition:

[T]o play against teams who I would say are programmed footballers, are organised, have been taught the game properly, are trained to play the game – and how England invented the game. And these Meadebrooks guys, who come out here and express themselves, go out and play football how they feel, and beat teams like that! To me ... it was the greatest statement of black players who play local football.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ Ibid. p81

³⁹⁷ John Williams and Rogan Taylor, 'Boys Keep Swinging: Masculinity and Football Culture' in Tim Newburn and Elizabeth Anne Stanko, eds., *Just Boys Doing Business: Men, Masculinity and Crime* (London, 1995)

³⁹⁸ The Football League Review 1971-72 p4

³⁹⁹ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p72

These testimonies demonstrate that for many of the founding members, how Cavaliers played was bound up within their black identities and thus, was equally as important as winning football matches. In some cases it was more important:

It is important to play with some flair. If we go out and beat a team 10-0, structured, then we don't want it... we do it fast, we do it fluently, we see a lot of skill on the ball... we prefer that and winning 1-0 or drawing...⁴⁰⁰

It is important to point out that with very little data on the styles adopted by grass-roots teams and the levels of coaching that took place in this format of the game during this period, it is difficult to confirm or challenge accounts of the existence of certain inherent styles of play. It is also difficult to ascertain whether-or-not the styles of football discussed here were characteristic of *all* black grass-roots football, or were regionally specific. Nonetheless, such perceptions tell us something about how these men viewed themselves as black and 'racialised' subjects. Their conscious awareness of these differences and their determination to openly express them through sport, suggests that these black men also used football to demonstrate that although they embraced the English game, they did not see themselves as – nor did they want to be - English.

Lastly, Cavaliers' players' open endorsement of the existence of physiological and cultural attributes common to all British black sportsmen embodied within how they 'naturally' played the game, draws our attention to the fact that through football, these men began to perceive themselves as a part of the same ethnic group. This is significant, as during this period there was no singular black ethnic identity. Instead the black community consisted of multi-communities, which largely coalesced around the various islands from which they came (see *Chapter 1*). It is to further examine the ways in which playing football for Cavaliers assisted in forging a newly emerging sense of ethnic one-ness among this group of young men, to which I now turn.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. p77

Local football and black identity homogenisation

Caribbean migrants brought with them to Britain their own social divisions. Caribbean identity politics at the time coalesced around issues of class, complexion, ethnicity, geography and nationality.⁴⁰¹ James argues that the blanket political, social, employment and housing ghettoisation experienced by black workers when they first came to England helped to make irrelevant their island – and class – divisions.⁴⁰² The point is illustrated by Leicester man, Darcy:

[They] didn't care whether you were from Jamaica or Antigua... You couldn't say I am superior to him he is from Antigua and I am Jamaican. It didn't work that way. We were all in it together, so eventually we realised that we were all one, we are all the same.

These identity divisions, however, were resilient. This was particularly evident within the Leicester context. As highlighted earlier, most of the various black organisations which emerged in Leicester during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, for example, were named after – and were centred upon – communities from specific Caribbean islands. However, the tight spatial dynamics of the Meadebrooks area combined with it being home to almost the entire black population in Leicester facilitated a tightly-knit sense of community, which eventually began to trump previous island identities. I want to demonstrate that while this particular geographic and employment clustering influenced the *adult* migrant workers' perceptions of black community and black identities, football and the Meadebrook Cavaliers team played a similar role in reshaping the perceptions of black identity within this group of young men.

Similarly to their parents, the majority of this wave of second-generation migrants had arrived from various islands across the Caribbean.⁴⁰³ Commenting on their cultural differences, Leicester Youth Worker, Jim Agass, noted that, '[t]he young people ... from all over the Caribbean... [we]re as foreign to each other as they are to the indigenous

⁴⁰¹ see C.L.R James, *Beyond a Boundary* Chapter 2: 'All The World's A Stage: The Light and the Dark'

⁴⁰² Winston James, 'Migration, Racism and Identity Formation: The Caribbean Experience in Britain' in Winston James and Clive Harris, eds., *Inside Babylon* (London, 1993)

⁴⁰³ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History*

community.⁴⁰⁴ Against this, Bryan argues that their shared experiences as teammates for Meadebrook Cavaliers - often assembled against racial adversity - facilitated a strong sense of ethnic-sameness:

[W]e hung on in there together. You know, Wilfred Manners, Hugh White, George Bell, all of them. All of us. Vinroy [too]. All of the group that formed the original youth team ...who we [all now] see as family members.

Founder member Hugh expands here by pointing out that, in his opinion, it was the intense bonds of comradeship formed through playing, winning, losing, and training together for Meadebrook Cavaliers which further underpinned the young men's developing understanding of black togetherness:

[W]e used to run up that hill, and run down. And run up it again... [T]he laughter we used to have. People used to get stitched up. [They] used to start spitting up [throwing up] because they're so absolutely shattered from the training... But it was good fun... And then we'd go and have fish and chips, or we'd go to somebody's house... It was wonderful. It was absolute comradeship. It was nice. No - it was brilliant.

It is important not to overstate the role of local sport in the transformation from separate island-based ethnic identities to a more unified African-Caribbean identity which took place during the first decades of settlement. Obviously, not all local first and second-generation black migrants engaged in black sports teams or in sport more widely. It is apparent, however, that for this specific group of young black men the Cavaliers team was a core space where their comprehensions of a shared and singular black identity were additionally underpinned.

Football had not only aided processes of local identity homogenisation between the young teenagers born from different islands, but it was also a forum which elicited connections between black sportsmen both here and in other parts of the world.⁴⁰⁵ Local black perceptions of black football (and footballers) as 'naturally' hyper-athletic and hyper-skilful were reinforced by the type of football displayed by the globally dominant *black* Brazilian football team during this period. Described by Carrington as sporting

⁴⁰⁴ Agass, *The Meadebrooks Project 1967/69* para.52-53

⁴⁰⁵ Carrington, *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora*

diaspora-connections, the influences of the 1970s black Brazilian football team on local understandings of sporting blackness in Leicester can be seen to be manifest in the very formation of the Cavaliers team.⁴⁰⁶ These trans-Atlantic and black connections were explicitly expressed, for example, in the preferred yellow colour of the Cavaliers shirts and by the style of football which Cavaliers' players believed black athletes naturally play:

We saw the Brazilians in the 1970 World Cup ...they were our greatest inspiration... [for] our own football team... We said, yes we want to form a team and we want to play like the Brazilians. (Bryan)

By 1975, Cavaliers were playing their home matches at Central Park, a large public park adjacent to the Meadebrooks area.⁴⁰⁷ From there, Cavaliers' dynamic performances and their consequent challenge to mainstream local English football quickly elevated the status of Cavaliers and its players to that of 'local heroes' among the younger members of the community, who could now walk the short distance to the local park.

It was one weekend during the 70s; a couple of us went up to the park and actually saw this all-black team! And obviously dressed in yellow... and don't forget we were very young, and we was going, "there was Brazil! Brazil is in Leicester!" You had your Blakes [brothers]... Wilfred Manners... These people to me was the quickest... [A]nd when I saw this team... I wanted to know and find out how we could get involved (Adrian)

Cavaliers were then like my dream team after that.... Because it was like the elite, good black guys who used to play for this club...their football was like swift, fast, skilful... (Derek, ex-Cavaliers player and second-generation African-Caribbean)

For young black football enthusiasts starved of black players in the professional game and who operated outside of the positions where black players were commonly 'stacked',⁴⁰⁸ the Cavaliers team, inadvertently, also provided a stream of role models in all positions, who were local and black.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p39

⁴⁰⁸ Maguire, 'Race and Position Assignment in English Soccer: A Preliminary Analysis of Ethnicity and Sport in Britain'

I was inspired by [Cavaliers].... I used to just watch them and copy them. I mean, I even moved away from watching professional footballers... ..I began... to craft myself in terms of how [Cavaliers]... were playing. (Adrian)

With young black players eager to join, the Cavaliers team quickly expanded, bringing together in close proximity the local neighbourhood's most talented footballers. As we have seen, many of these had already had trials and had been released by various professional football clubs. This near unique clustering of black footballers helped facilitate a burgeoning sense of ethnic one-ness among the players. This clustering also inadvertently focused the young players' awareness on the structural forces which had thus far shaped their black *sporting* realities. Being in such close proximity with other black players, the young Cavaliers players began to notice obvious correlations and blatant similarities in their individualised sporting experiences.

It was not until newcomer, Adrian, had joined Cavaliers, for example, that he began to question his rejection by Leicester City Football Club for being 'too short.' At Cavaliers he and his peers found themselves surrounded by other highly talented black players, who had similarly been rejected for the most ambiguous and contradictory reasons and whose only common denominator was the colour of their skin. Against this, Adrian and many of the other young players began to interpret the extent to which their sporting opportunities had been shaped by processes of institutionalised and structural racism. Realisations like this, which occurred within the context of the Cavaliers cultural space, would alter the way many of these young black players' perceived their own sporting and wider social realities (see *Chapter 7*). The 'game' had changed.

Concluding comments

In this chapter I have attempted, broadly, to sketch out the origins of Meadebrook Cavaliers. Initially the discussion connected the founding of Cavaliers to a wider episode of black community organisations, which characterised the first two-to-three decades of settlement in Leicester. Cavaliers' mobilisation also exhibited various noteworthy differences. It was a mobilisation *for* black youth, created *by* black youth. It

was in response to issues which defined the black *youth* experience in Leicester. It was sporting. Similarly to other immigrant groups who have relocated to Britain, it is clear that to those founding black sportsmen, Meadebrook Cavaliers was about more than just playing sport.⁴⁰⁹

Creating Cavaliers was also about the identity politics of a particular generation of young black men. On one hand, the young black men's apparent preference for football communicated that they were not simply 'Caribbean' per-se. On the other, through their style of play these young black players also expressed that they were not – nor did they perceive themselves to be – English. This style quickly formed a core component of the club's identity and embodied what Cavaliers and second-generation black youth were about (by the same token, the embrace of what we might describe as this anti-mainstream method of playing by some of Cavaliers players, served to also 'play back' to white racist Britain rather similar ideas about 'race' and difference). Thus, Cavaliers became a key cultural, social and spatial site. It was a space where these young black men could work through and express a social and cultural identity which was in fact *both* Caribbean and English.

The unequivocal point that Cavaliers was *about* achieving sporting success via the football pyramid while playing a particular brand of 'Caribbean' football, and was not about 'front line politics', was a staunchly argued and was a reoccurring claim made by various founder members. Despite this fact, as a platform through which a section of the local male black community gained access into what had been a largely black inaccessible sphere – English sport – meant that from its inception, Cavaliers was both implicitly and explicitly bound up within the politics of 'race', community and resistance.

Overt racism obviously shaped much of the black Leicester experience both inside and outside sport. In many instances, racial abuse spurred on the Cavaliers team, making players run for longer, tackle harder or it made a victory sweeter or a defeat harder to take. It was also necessary to demonstrate how general black exclusion from elite levels of local football and from the professional ranks, was a central factor in the capacity of

⁴⁰⁹ David Dee, *Jews and British Sport: Integration, Ethnicity and Anti-Semitism, c1880-c1960* (PhD Thesis, De Montfort University, 2011)

Cavaliers to achieve local football success so rapidly. High-calibre white players in the city (particularly those who would have been attached to professional clubs as juniors) seldom filtered down to the park-based levels of the game, where Cavaliers operated. Cavaliers' unique ability to draw on almost the city's entire cohort of elite black footballers meant the Cavaliers team rapidly ascended through the lower local leagues. Ironically, it was these processes of black sporting exclusion which enabled Cavaliers to dominate local football in Leicester and develop into what Williams has described as 'unquestionably the best junior club in Leicestershire', and one of 'the strongest 'black' local league club[s] in Britain'.⁴¹⁰

With regards to the previously divided identity politics of this group, it was apparent that a combination of their similar experiences of exclusions in sport and the bonds of brotherhood which team sport elicits, contributed to these young men's subscription to a wider and emerging consensus about a common African-Caribbean identity in Britain. Alongside a generic black experience which, for-the-most-part, consisted of an educational, geographic and social ghettoization, their shared marginalisation in football and the intense bonds of unity which resulted within the Cavaliers team, played an obvious role in forging a more unified African-Caribbean identity among these young men.

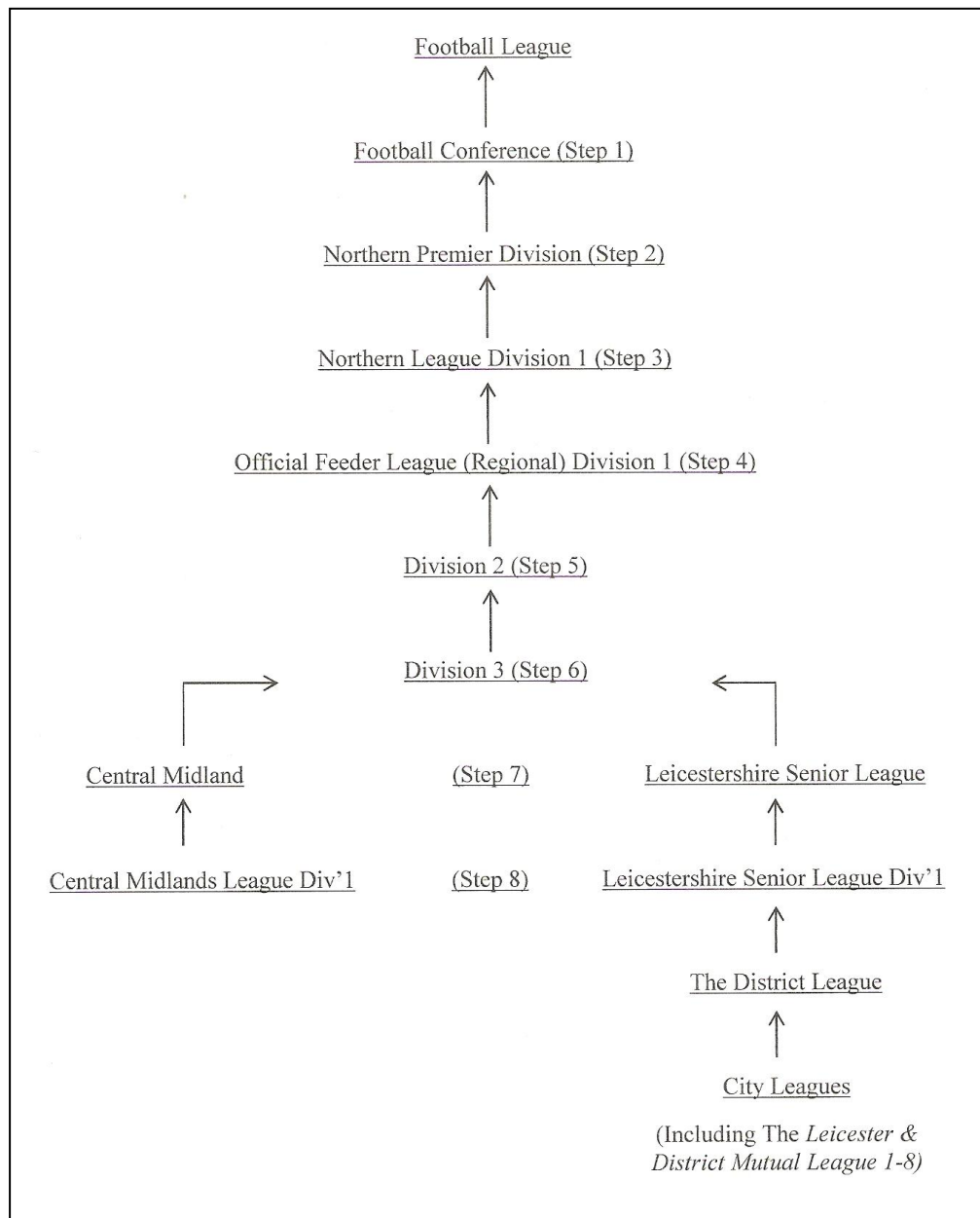
⁴¹⁰ Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England' p175

Figure 4.1: Fairfield Road Youth Club, Market Harborough, taking part in a church carnival procession

(Source taken from *County of Leicester Youth Handbook 1956-57* p33)



Figure 4.2: The Football Pyramid (Northern Route) in the early 1990s Source: Meadebrook Cavaliers Match Programmes (season 1991/1992)



Chapter 5

From Parks Team to Football Club

Social policy, generational change and BAME grassroots football in Leicester

Introduction

In 1981 Meadebrook Cavaliers was a successful parks team which played its home matches on Central Park just south of Leicester city centre. By 2000, Meadebrook Cavaliers were playing home matches on the club's privately owned, eleven-acre ground which also had floodlights, a club-house and changing facilities. That season Cavaliers also won the Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division – for the first and only time - with a team which was widely believed by those within and outside of the club, to have been paid. In short, during this period Cavaliers had become a player-paying football *club*. This chapter argues that these highlighted developments were only in part connected to sport. They were also linked to a particular wave of wider social policies. Finally, they were also connected to a changing identity politics of a new wave of third-generation Black Britons.

It is important to note that those who were referred to as the 'third-generation' within the Cavaliers club were not a new generation of African-Caribbeans per-se. Instead they were a combination of younger – or the last wave of - second-generation black sportsmen and the first wave of the third-generation. For sake of clarity, however, henceforth I, like the second-generation African-Caribbeans within this study, will also refer to this cohort as 'third-generation African-Caribbeans.'

There exists a body of research on the development of sports clubs in England. Within this canon, sport interested scholars have explored the historical development of various sports clubs and organisations. This has included, for example, the growth of sports

clubs out of the crisis of the Anglican Church in the 1800s.⁴¹¹ It has also connected modern sport to voluntary associations and sites of male sociability, such as the public house.⁴¹²

There is also an increasing interest in the role/influence of sport policy on sport, sports clubs and in wider social life in Britain. This has been reflected in the creation of the *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* in 2009. Commenting on the significance of sport policy to wider academia, Coakley remarks that:

Sport policy is assuming greater importance at local, regional, national and international levels... Sports events are increasingly being supported by governments at local, regional and national levels... [This journal] will help in the process of exploring the way sport policy...effects ...communities.⁴¹³

While recognition of the impact of sport policy on wider social life has increased, the impact of wider social policy on local sport - what we might describe as an 'unintended consequence' - have been less forthcoming. Subsequently, little is known, for example, about the ways in which non-sport-related policy has influenced the development of British BAME grass-roots football clubs. By the same token, little is known about this influence on the BAME individual's sporting experience in Britain.

These two issues provide the starting point for the discussion within this chapter. In the first section I explore how social policies and strategies designed to re-enfranchise a restless urban black youth, inadvertently enabled Cavaliers to acquire its own ground and enter higher levels of competition. In short, I sketch out how a particular wave of social policies were central in enabling the black men within the club to continue with their mission - to prove sporting points. The second section describes how the same wave of policies which enabled Cavaliers to become something of a marker for local

⁴¹¹ David Nash et al, 'Organizational and Associational Life' in David Nash and David Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Gloucester, 1993)

⁴¹² David Nash et al, 'Leisure and Consumption' in Nash and Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century*; Jeff Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 2002); Stefan Szymanski, 'A Theory of the Evolution of Modern Sport' *Journal of Sport History* (35) 1 (2008) pp.1-32

⁴¹³ Jay Coakley, 'International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics' Taylor and Francis <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/19406940.asp>

black community symbiosis and unity, simultaneously facilitated new socio-economic divisions within Cavaliers' membership and management committee.

The final section explores Cavaliers' decision to become a player-paying club. This development is argued to be connected to the emergence of a new, and seemingly more racially tolerant, local football landscape, where white clubs were increasingly competing for black talent. I argue that this decision was also about Cavaliers' diminishing cultural hold over black youth in the city and an attempt to adjust to the noticeably different attitudes of the newly emerging third-generation of black sportsmen within the club. By way of context, I will start by describing the wider political climate in which the chapter is couched.

Context

The black British experience in 1980s Britain

In the context of race relations, Hiro argues that the first half of the 1980s was a particularly ugly and violent period in recent British history.⁴¹⁴ It was also a decade when British blackness continued to make small, but noticeable, inroads into mainstream Britain. British blackness was perhaps most visible within the British music industry and within British sports, such as, boxing, athletics and football.⁴¹⁵ In 1982, for example, Nottingham born footballer, Viv Anderson made his full debut for England. By 1985, black players accounted for 11% of professional footballers within the old English First Division.⁴¹⁶

A small but significant black British presence was also emerging within professional and grass-roots football in Leicester. During this decade Mark Bright and Lawrie Cunningham made their debuts at Filbert Street. They followed previous Leicester City black players such as, Larry May and Everton Carr. Performances of local BAME

⁴¹⁴ Dilip Hiro, *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations* (London, 1991) p81

⁴¹⁵ Claire Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* (Oxford, 1996); Ernest Cashmore, *Black Sportsmen* (London, 1982)

⁴¹⁶ Martin Polley, *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* (London, 1998) p154 (It should be noted, however, that Polley does not state if this figure includes black players operating within the reserves or youth teams in the then, English First Division)

football teams such as Meadebrook Cavaliers, were also contributing to some grudging recognition of black talent among white coaches operating in the non-professional game. In turn, by the mid-1980s a very small number of Leicester's black players were recruited by some of the county's more success-driven local (white) clubs. Clubs such as, Knighton-based Friar Lane Old Boys are reported to have fielded black players throughout this decade.⁴¹⁷

Black visibility in local sport also increased with the emergence of more Leicester-based BAME founded sports clubs. By 1984, the city was also home to *Highfield Cosmos FC*, *FC Rima*, *Caribbeans FC*, *Highfield Dynamo FC*, Leicester Nirvana (now *Thurnby*), the *Badgers Running Club*, the *Red Fox Climbing Club* and the *Overseas Cricket Club* (among others).⁴¹⁸ The inroads made in sport were impressive, especially when contrasted with the levels of marginalisation and structural arrangements which shaped the wider black experience in 1980s Britain: the experiences which Hiro makes reference to at the outset.

The wider black experience in Britain during this decade was characterised by: heavy handed policing, judicial incompetence and political neglect;⁴¹⁹ structural ghettoisation within the education and housing spheres; and disproportionate levels of unemployment.⁴²⁰ The latter was in part the consequence of a wider economic recession.⁴²¹ On black unemployment, Ohri and Faruqi highlight that in 1985, five-in-ten African-Caribbeans were unemployed. This was compared to one-in-ten white workers in Britain.⁴²² Westwood connotes that locally, in 1983, 25% of African-

⁴¹⁷ John Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* (Leicester, 1993)

⁴¹⁸ Sue Glyptis et al, *Sport and the Unemployed: Final Report on the Monitoring of Sport Council Schemes in Leicester, Derewentshire and Hockley Port 1981-84* (Sports Council, 1986) p79-80; Overseas Cricket Club, *10th Anniversary Match Programme* August 17, 1984

⁴¹⁹ Christine F Collette and Keith Laybourn, 'Ethnicity and Racial Equality' in Collette and Laybourn, eds., *Modern Britain since 1979: A Reader* (London, 2003); Paul Lewis, 'Blair Peach Killed by Police at 1979 Protest, Met report finds' *The Guardian* March 27, 2010; David Smith, 'Policing and Urban Unrest' in John Benyon and John Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest* (Oxford, 1987); John Solomos, *Race and Racisms in Britain* (3rd ed.) (Basingstoke, 2003) Chapter 7: 'Urban Unrest and the Politics of Protest'

⁴²⁰ John Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass* (Aldershot, 1988)

⁴²¹ Stuart Hall, 'Urban Unrest in Britain' in Benyon and Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest*

⁴²² Sushel Ohri & Shalsta Faruqi, 'Racism, Employment and Unemployment' in Ashok Bhat et al, eds., *Britain's Black Population: A New Perspective* (2nd ed.) (Aldershot, 1988) p69

Caribbeans were unemployed in Leicester. This percentage increased to 45% and to 23.6% for Leicester's African-Caribbean and white school leavers, respectively.⁴²³ Commenting on the exaggerated effects of unemployment, Griffin surmised that '[l]ong-term structural unemployment has hit some groups disproportionately hard, especially... Asian and Afro-Caribbean people.'⁴²⁴

Drawing inspiration, in part, from the American Black Power movement, several UK-based black political resistance groups emerged during this period.⁴²⁵ It was, however, Britain's black communities' less democratic and more violent reaction to their 'extensive levels of alienation' and deep feelings of 'social injustice' which brought their situation to the forefront of local and national Government agendas.⁴²⁶

Between 1980 and 1981, 29 'disturbances' involving black youth, took place in inner-urban locales across Britain.⁴²⁷ Contrary to Leicester's prior claim that race riots 'would not happen' in its city, for two days in July 1981, violence also broke-out on Leicester's streets.⁴²⁸ Leicester experienced two simultaneous 'riots'; one in Gallowtree Gate (in the city centre), and one in the Meadebrooks area.⁴²⁹ While the riots in the city centre involved predominantly white youths, the disturbances in the Meadebrooks area involved mainly black youths (according to Cavaliers folklore, many of Cavaliers players took part in the disturbances).

⁴²³ Sallie Westwood, 'Red Star Over Leicester: Racism, the Politics of Identity and Black Youth in Leicester' in Pnina Werbner and Muhammad Anwar, eds., *Black and Ethnic Leaderships: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action* (London, 1991) p50

⁴²⁴ Christine Griffin, *Black and White Youth in a Declining Job Market Centre For Mass Communication Research* (University of Leicester, 1986) p1

⁴²⁵ These included the *Southall Black Sisters*, the *Organisation of Women of Asian and African Decent* (OWAAD), the *Liverpool Black Sisters*, the *Liverpool Somali Community*, the *Merseyside Nigerian Association*, the *Amandudu Women's Refuge* and the *Elimu Wa Name*. See Collette and Laybourn, 'Ethnicity and Racial Equality'

⁴²⁶ Hall, 'Urban Unrest in Britain'; Lord Scarman, 'The Quest for Social Justice' in Benyon and Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest*; John Solomos and Les Back, *Race, Politics and Social Change* (London, 1995)

⁴²⁷ Collette and Laybourn, 'Ethnicity and Racial Equality' p247

⁴²⁸ 'Race Riots are not likely in Leicester: Coloured People Are Accepted Here' *Leicester Mercury* August 28, 1958

⁴²⁹ 'The Night Madness Came to Leicester' *Leicester Mercury* July 11, 1981

According to local journalists, both areas were occupied by gangs which consisted of 150 youths.⁴³⁰ They also reported that over the two days 68 arrests were made.⁴³¹ Glyptis argues that the riots brought ‘stark visibility to the social conditions’ and high unemployment which shaped the realities of inner-urban youth.⁴³² In response, national and local government accelerated the implementation of various strategies, initiatives and policies designed to re-enfranchise Britain’s unemployed and alienated inner-urban black youth.⁴³³

Government response to the 1980 and 1981 ‘Race Riots’ and its impact on BAME sport in Leicester

The political focus on disengaged inner-urban communities and on unemployed inner-city youth during this period was influenced, in part, by two agendas: Firstly, a desire to avoid a repeat of the urban disturbances;⁴³⁴ and, secondly, the British government had redirected funding away from supporting industry, to improving human capital. Predominantly, this took place through an increased number of training programmes, a ‘modest expansion’ of Higher Education (HE) and a ‘modest loosening’ of HE entry requirements.⁴³⁵ In Leicester, this largely translated into the creation of various drop-in-centres. In 1977, for example, the Leicester Youth Unemployment Drop-in centre (B1) opened on Rutland Street.⁴³⁶ Additionally, various inner-urban based youth training schemes were commissioned throughout the city, such as the Highfields Induction and Training Scheme.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁰ ‘Cars Burned in Streets’ *Leicester Mercury* July 11, 1981

⁴³¹ ‘The Night Madness Came to Leicester’ *Leicester Mercury* July 11, 1981; ‘Police Cordon Holds Riots in Meadebrooks’ *Leicester Mercury* July 13, 1981

⁴³² Sue Glyptis, ‘Local Authority Sports Provision for the Unemployed: The UK Experience’ *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (26) 2 (1991) pp.101-115 p102

⁴³³ Glyptis et al, *Sport and the Unemployed: Final Report on the monitoring of Sport Council Schemes in Leicester, Derwentshire and Hockley Port 1981-84*; Westwood, ‘Red Star Over Leicester: Racism, the Politics of Identity and Black Youth in Leicester’

⁴³⁴ See Collette and Laybourn, ‘Thatcher, Thatcher’s Britain and Thatcherism: Government and Conservative Politics 1979-2002’ in Collette and Laybourn, eds., *Modern Britain since 1979: A Reader* (London, 2003)

⁴³⁵ Lesley Hannah, ‘Crisis and Turnaround? 1973-1993’ in Paul Johnson, eds., *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London, 1994) p347-348

⁴³⁶ *B1 Annual Report 1980/81*

⁴³⁷ Nash et al, ‘Organizational and Associational Life’ p188

Participation in sport was identified by various politicians and public bodies, such as the Sports Council, as a way to reduce boredom in Britain's unemployed youth and provide them with formal qualifications.⁴³⁸ Glyptis highlights the fact that prior to – *and certainly after* – the riots, politicians and public authorities saw sport as an integral part of the process of re-engaging those marginalised sections who were suffering from social disillusionment caused by prolonged unemployment – especially urban based black youth.⁴³⁹ Against these kinds of recommendations, national and local funds were redirected into improving *existing* – and creating new – local sports clubs and facilities which served BAME communities in particular.

During this period, various local training schemes across the East-Midlands were commissioned. These included the Nottingham Probation and After Care Scheme ('Have-a-go' Scheme) and the Sports Training and Recreation Scheme (STARS) in Nottingham and Leicester respectively.⁴⁴⁰ The latter scheme impacted considerably on a section of Cavaliers' membership. The three year STARS project cost the Sports Council £115,600.⁴⁴¹ It offered a range of sports provisions at various venues within the city of Leicester. In its first year it attracted 14,134 local attendees.⁴⁴² In addition to alleviating boredom among urban youth, STARS was also designed to provide work-based opportunities for young people within the target communities. It would enable them to gain recognised qualifications and work-related-experience in the leisure sector. In short, STARS would 'encourage', 'develop' and 'train' BAME sports leaders so they could, 'continue to manage... [local BAME] activities in years to come.'⁴⁴³

These kinds of schemes also served a secondary purpose. Even prior to the riots, Leicester's local council had recognised that successful engagement with the city's BAME communities required workforce representation. It also required workers who

⁴³⁸ *Sport and the Unemployed: A Report by the Sports Council, East Midland Region May 1983*

⁴³⁹ Glyptis et al, *Sport and the Unemployed: Final Report on the monitoring of Sport Council Schemes in Leicester, Derwentshire and Hockley Port 1981-84*; 'Local Authority Sports Provision for the Unemployed: The UK Experience'

⁴⁴⁰ *Sport and the Unemployed: A Report by the Sports Council, East Midland Region May 1983*

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. p6

⁴⁴² Ibid. p9

⁴⁴³ Ibid. p7

could empathise with service users from those targeted communities.⁴⁴⁴ Subsequently, many of the BAME leaders identified in schemes such as STARS, along with local BAME youth workers from across the city, were offered careers within the local authority. As Derek and Adrian's accounts both demonstrate:

[W]hen I left school ...I was an apprentice carpenter ... [but] I was just mad about sport. So I used to follow a few friends... [to] the city council's coaching scheme... called STARS ...and from since then, my jobs have been working with young people... Well I'm a youth worker now. (Derek)

I did a bit of engineering. During that time Leicester had its major riot. [STARS] asked who would be interested [in helping to run the scheme], and five of us went across and decided, right we would run it... During the scheme, there were some people from City Council who came down and ...they identified me... So this guy from City Council said ...I should apply for the post ...A Sports Recreation Worker. And I got the post... And that's how I got into... the local authority... (Adrian)

Through similar processes to those outlined above, a small number of Cavaliers members were taken out of labour-intensive, low income professions and placed on degree courses and into white-collar careers within the local authority. The transition from a black and economically marginalised Leicester into white and mainstream Leicester, presented many of these young black men with unique cultural, social and identity challenges (which I will explore in more depth in *Chapter 7*). Additionally, the 'cultural capital' (networking opportunities, practical skills and increased familiarisation with procedures, such as funding and grant applications) which the Cavaliers members acquired as a result of their new positions within local government, would also impact profoundly on the political spaces that the Cavaliers club would eventually cross-over into (see *Chapter 6* and *Chapter 8*).

Initiatives aimed at improving existing local sports provision had a more obvious and more tangible impact on the Cavaliers club. As a park-based *team*, Cavaliers' lack of facilities meant they could not progress beyond the lower levels of junior football. By the early 1980s Cavaliers had begun exploring various avenues to acquire a ground of

⁴⁴⁴ Gurparal Singh, 'Multiculturalism in Contemporary Britain: Reflections on the "Leicester Model"' *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (5) 1 (2003) pp.40-55

their own (such as applying to the local authority and staging various fund raising events).⁴⁴⁵ Their attempts prior to 1981 however, had proved unsuccessful. Some of the members involved in the application process point to the Leicester riots and the subsequent political strategies enacted, as central factors within the council's decision to eventually assist the Cavaliers team:

There was a few grounds that we applied for... one was on Ethel Road... we couldn't get that. We applied for somewhere on Plashet Park... we can't get that either... So it happened in about 1980... While the bidding was going through all the race riots in 81 and that happened... [S]o I think that gave us a leg up type-of-thing... So when our bid went in it got looked on more favourable then... (George)⁴⁴⁶

[H]ad it not been for those riots, because they were national, we may not be where we are, in terms of being at Parkview. (Bryan)

Shortly after the Leicester riots, the city council offered Cavaliers an eleven-acre former refuse tip site on Parkview Lane in suburban St. Mays, a purpose built clubhouse, changing facilities and approximately £7,000 a-year-financial assistance for the following 25 years (being in receipt of this level of government funding meant that a local government representative was required to sit on Cavaliers Management Committee Meetings for the first five years of financial aid).⁴⁴⁷

The prospect of permanently relocating the club some four miles outside of the Meadebrooks area caused debates over space, identity, community and practicality to resurface (see *Chapter 4*). As one founder member points out, practical and everyday issues such as, "How do you get black people out there when most of us didn't have transport and our parents didn't" (Bryan), were important points which needed to be considered - and resolved. Notwithstanding this, Hugh explains that for the young black men determined to play elite level non-league football, the council's offer was simply too good to turn down:

⁴⁴⁵ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History*

⁴⁴⁶ Also see Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* Chapter 10: 'Move on up: From Central Park to Parkview Lane'

⁴⁴⁷ The council representative who eventually sat on Cavaliers' management committee meetings was Councillor Culdipp S. Bhatti MBE (Fieldwork Journal May 30 and June 13, 2011)

We didn't want to come to St. Mays. However, this was the only area that they had at the time that suited what we wanted. Imagine, they offer us an area big enough for three football pitches... a clubhouse... a cricket square ...and a car park. And we turned that down!?

New competitions, new racisms and new 'ethnic closures'

Cavaliers' new facilities enabled them to access higher and ground-graded levels of competition. This raises obvious but important questions, such as: In what ways did this development enable Cavaliers' members to continue to prove sporting points? What new forms of racism did they experience in these new competitions? These two questions shape the parameters for the discussion in the next section.

Proving Sporting points: The 'Untouchables' and the Caribbean Times Cup c.1985/86 - 1986/87

Their new Parkview base enabled Cavaliers to enter and, in turn, win the ground-graded Leicester District League Division 1 title, in the 1985/86 season. This was followed by finishing runners up in the District League Premier Division the following year. That year Cavaliers also won the Leicestershire Junior Cup. This was a competition which the local media had described as the barometer for ascertaining the county's 'Best Junior team'.⁴⁴⁸ The following season (1987/88) Cavaliers won the District League Premier Division - winning twenty-two out of twenty-four matches - *and* retained the Junior Cup. The apparent invincibility of this team, alongside the exuberant manner in which the league and cup double was won, resulted in the local paper hailing them, 'The Untouchables'.⁴⁴⁹

That same season Cavaliers also won the national *Caribbean Times*' Knock-Out Cup competition or the 'Bob Marley Cup'.⁴⁵⁰ The competition was one of several national knockout tournaments sponsored by the *Caribbean Times* newspaper (the others included a knock-out Cricket competition – the Viv Richards Cup - and a knock-out

⁴⁴⁸ 'Cavaliers Fly District Flag' *Leicester Mercury* August 24, 1985

⁴⁴⁹ 'The Untouchables' *Leicester Mercury* April 9, 1988

⁴⁵⁰ 'Caribbean Knock-Out Football Competition' *Caribbean Times* May 2-8, 1986

dominoes tournament).⁴⁵¹ Coverage of the tournament often dominated the nationwide black newspaper's sports pages.

The *Caribbean Times* Cup was a tournament 'open' to all clubs and teams. The only entry requirement formally stipulated was that matches were played on a set date (always on a Sunday) and at a set venue: Raynes Park in Wimbledon (London). Entry was obtained via application (initially entrants filled-out an entry form on the back of the paper; see Figure 5.1).⁴⁵² Subsequently, the competition consisted of established Saturday and Sunday league teams as well as 'scratch-teams' which had been cannibalised from various other sides.

Cavaliers first entered the competition in 1985/86, losing at the quarter final stage.⁴⁵³ They re-entered in 1986/87. That year 32 teams entered the tournament which offered £1,000 to the competition winners, £500 to the runners-up and £200 for the losing semi-finalists.⁴⁵⁴ Cavaliers competed alongside other sides such as, Golden Lion FC, Asian Action Group, Panthers, Derby '86 FC and Ten-Em-Be;⁴⁵⁵ eventually winning the tournament by beating favourites, Caribb FC 2-1 in the final.⁴⁵⁶

The tournament brought together clubs/teams representative of black urban spaces and communities from across the country. Subsequently, it was also and inadvertently bound up within what we might describe as the intra-racial and inter-city identity politics of young black men in Britain. Rivalries between black men from different British cities (or areas within British cities) were, and remain, commonplace – particularly within the construction of young black male masculinities.⁴⁵⁷ As discussed

⁴⁵¹ 'Caribbean Times Viv Richards Cricket Knock-Out Cup' *Caribbean Times* March 14-20, 1986

⁴⁵² For the 1987 tournament, the application process changed to club secretaries having to write a letter, formally requesting an application form.

⁴⁵³ 'Results of the Caribbean Times Football Knock Out Competition 85... 1' *Caribbean Times* January 24-30, 1986

⁴⁵⁴ 'Caribbean Knock-Out Football Competition Draw' *Caribbean Times* April 10-16, 1987

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Caribbean Times 'KO Football Final: Meadebrook Cavaliers' Historic Victory' July 31 - August 5, 1987

⁴⁵⁷ Sallie Westwood, 'Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space' in Jeff Hearn and David Morgan, eds., *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory* (London, 1990); Les Back, 'Home From Home': Youth, Belonging and Place' in Claire Alexander and Caroline Knowles, eds., *Making Race Matter: Bodies, Space and Identity* (Basingstoke, 2005)

in the previous chapter, space, territory and locality alongside football were central components within the construction of black male identity in Leicester.

‘Blackness’ in Leicester has often been over-shadowed by more high-profile black communities to the west, in Birmingham, and to the south, in London. One ex-player admits that the first time Cavaliers competed in the national Cup, they found themselves being “bullied by the London boys. Because we weren’t used to the attitude of them and their aggressive behaviour” (Derek). Against this, another ex-Cavaliers player claimed that their eventual triumph in the *Caribbean Times* Cup, particularly as it was against a black team from London, had placed blackness – or black masculinity - in Leicester “on the [national] map”.⁴⁵⁸

The continuing importance and centrality of being a part of this particular sporting achievement (and being a part of the ‘Untouchables’ team) within these men’s wider and everyday social realities, is clearly demonstrated by Derek’s recollection of a recent trip to London which took place more than two decades after the Caribbean Cup was won:

I went to watch some veteran game [in London] not too long ago, and... me and this lad was talking... He was telling me that, “Yeah I remember against Meadebrook Cavaliers - you guys were a hot team!” And he says to me, “Listen, for a ‘country team’” - because that’s what they kept calling us - “...trust me, you guys had it! You guys had some football talent. Now, we in London always boast, but [I have to admit] you guys had some talent.” I’ll never forget that, because for them to remember us from all them days ago, it shows that Cavaliers was a good club. And we went places. We went far...

Competing in the Bob Marley Cup also exposed Cavaliers to manifestations of racism which most of the players had not experienced previously. According to various former Cavaliers players, the inclusion of some non-black players in their team caused some of the opposing all-black teams to question the legitimacy of Cavaliers as an authentic ‘black’ club: “They saw [our non-black players] and said ‘What kind of team we came to play man, with these white boys?’”.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p68

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. p71

As discussed in the previous chapter, a player's skin colour had never been the sole criterion on which access into the Cavaliers club was granted. A players' inclusion was usually granted on his geographic, social and cultural connection to the Meadebrooks area, his embrace of Cavaliers' approach to football and, of course, his ability to play. This is clearly demonstrated in the affectionate ways in which early white Cavaliers players, such as Gordon Pike, are remembered within the club:

At the start there was one white guy called Gordon Pike. He was a legend, played all the way through the beginning. Gordon lived in the Meadebrooks...⁴⁶⁰

Gordon was controlling the midfield. We was that close we didn't even think of him as being white.⁴⁶¹

We used to have this kid in our team called Gordon Pike... He was a great player and could have gone places, but stood by Cavaliers.⁴⁶²

Another white ex-Cavaliers player points out that despite his non-African-Caribbean ethnicity, sportingly and culturally he felt that he had more in common with this black club than with any local white teams:

I went to Hillcroft [another team] for four months once, but the reason I left was because I wasn't enjoying my football so much and the community spirit wasn't there. Although I'm a white player I remember one of the players saying when I told him I was going back to Cavaliers, 'Is it because there's no black players here?' ... I was a bit stuck but I thought, 'Well it is!'⁴⁶³

Similarly, one South Asian-heritage ex-Cavaliers player argued that with regard to his sporting performance and body-management on pitch (playing 'style'), he felt that he had more in common with his black teammates than he did with other South Asian footballers: "I don't think I played like an Asian player: there's a difference between an Asian player and an Afro-Caribbean player".⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. p37

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. p71

⁴⁶² Ibid. p65-66

⁴⁶³ Ibid. p47

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. p81

Although one cannot easily separate the black sporting experience from the black physical form, these accounts further de-essentialize ideas of sporting blackness. They suggest that it is something which often can include more than common background, ethnicity or skin colour. Thus, Cavaliers' success in the *Caribbean Times* Cup was also - and inadvertently - about proving that they *were* a black club, as much as proving they were the *best* black football team. The following year Cavaliers unsuccessfully tried to defend the *Caribbean Times* Cup. They did not enter the competition again. Members within the club suggest that this was because of a combination of reasons, such as: Cavaliers had already won the competition; travelling to London was taxing; the club's attention was now centred on competing at the local Senior League level.⁴⁶⁵

Reaching the Leicestershire Senior League

After winning the District League Premier Division, Cavaliers were accepted into the Senior League-standard, regional Central Midlands League (CML) to compete in its Division 1 for the 1988/89 season (Step 8 on the FA pyramid, See Figure 4.2). Promotion to Senior level football was not won automatically, but granted by the individual Senior League. Acceptance was usually granted if the team applying had finished sufficiently high enough in an appropriate feeder division and providing the team's facilities met the Senior League's local standard. Commenting on their arrival at the Senior League level, the then club Chairman, Bryan wrote:

This season heralds the end of one era in the Club's history for the first team and the beginning of another... and we hope the next 17 years brings it's [sic] fair share of interest, excitement and success.⁴⁶⁶

In addition to a new standard of football, Cavaliers' new era was also marked by various noteworthy developments *off* the pitch. In what the chairman argued was something, 'in keeping with [their] new Central Midlands Senior League Status', that season, Cavaliers introduced a Match Programme for first-team games (which cost

⁴⁶⁵ Fieldwork Journal May 30, 2011

⁴⁶⁶ *Meadebrook Cavaliers v Howell Sports FC* Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports and Social Club (Central Midland League Match) Match Programme August 13, 1988

twenty-pence), and charged supporters an entrance fee (fifty-pence for first-team games and thirty-pence for reserve and A team matches).⁴⁶⁷ Cavaliers' facility-aided capacity to be the first Leicester BAME club to access the higher levels of local Junior football had enhanced the club's ability to continue to attract the best local BAME talent. This was evidenced in 1984, when the club created a third senior men's team; *Meadebrook Cavaliers A*. The capacity to attract high calibre players was further enhanced when Cavaliers became the first BAME club in the county to access Senior League level football. This time, however, it was not only talented young players who gravitated to Cavaliers for the opportunity to play Senior League football, but it had also brought founder member, Celestine, back to the club in 1988. At 35, he explained that the opportunity to play at Senior League level "had given him a new lease of life."⁴⁶⁸

The move to a more geographically-spread regional league again presented Cavaliers with significant logistical challenges (see previous chapter). In the CML, Cavaliers were the most southerly located side. Matches against north Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire based clubs such as, *Shirebrook Collieries*, *Blidworth* and *Mickleover RBL* represented expensive, one-hundred-mile-plus journeys. Ex-Cavaliers player, Sola explains that this meant that the club and its mostly working class players had to spend "ridiculous sums of money on travel."⁴⁶⁹ In addition to cost, ex-goalkeeper and club secretary, Everton, highlights the fact that getting the entire team to away matches – and on time – was another new challenge. Particularly as the squad contained a number of players who possessed what might be described as 'relaxed' perceptions and negotiations of time:

[T]he Central Midlands League? Now that is going into Nottingham... but when you try to get black guys to turn up at 12 o'clock, for a three o'clock kick-off? You know, we were still laid-back... And then you're rushing... the Central Midlands...was a good standard of football... There is no doubt about that! But you know, the logistics of it were a nightmare!

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ *Meadebrook Cavaliers v Mickleover Royal British Legion* 'Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports and Social Club (Central Midland League Match) December 24, 1988

⁴⁶⁹ cited in John Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England' in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (Aldershot, 1994) p176

This issue was particularly pertinent for midweek away matches. Additionally, work commitments often resulted in numerous player unavailability or players arriving moments before kick-off. The inability to consistently field their strongest team was apparent when only four months into their debut season in the CML, First-Team Manager, Ordell, commented that he had already used ‘a remarkable number of players.’⁴⁷⁰ This undoubtedly impacted on Cavaliers’ performances during their three seasons in this competition. The expense and inconvenience of travelling, alongside their original desire to play within their own city’s Senior League level football competition, meant that when the opportunity arose for Cavaliers to relocate to the Leicestershire Senior League in 1992, the club took the sideways step.

New ethnic closures: Cavaliers and the Leicestershire Senior League

The following account from one ex-Cavaliers player, offers a useful insight into the ways in which Cavaliers’ engagement with the Leicestershire Senior League (LSL) and how the local County Football Association (CFA) were perceived internally by the black club during this period.

[The Leicestershire Senior League] know we are... good enough... but they deny us the status and the avenues to cement that status... I’m disgusted at the way there is this covert attitude towards the club now; at one time it [racial exclusion] was very open but now it’s covert and you can’t challenge it ‘cos there will always be a ‘justifiable’ attitude for it happening.⁴⁷¹

His observation that the kinds of racism directed at the club had become more covert as they moved from the Junior leagues into Senior local football, provides a useful starting point to explore some of the ways that their transformation into a club – the result of central government policy - had brought Cavaliers into contact with new and more complex forms of ‘ethnic closure.’⁴⁷² During Meadebrook Cavaliers’ climb through the park-based and junior leagues, most of their experiences of racism had come from

⁴⁷⁰ *Meadebrook Cavaliers v Mickleover Royal British Legion*’ Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports and Social Club (Central Midland League Match) December 24, 1988

⁴⁷¹ Williams, ‘‘Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ p175-176

⁴⁷² Ibid. p175

alleged ‘biased’ officials, substantial fines, match suspensions, and verbal abuse from opposing players and supporters: “You were getting called nigger this, nigger that... [O]ne week, a player turned to Skids and spat in his face”.⁴⁷³ The kinds of overt articulations of racism earlier accounts had reported.

In the lower leagues, Cavaliers’ progression was largely dictated by what happened *on the pitch*. Thus, progression was often determined by the team’s capacity to resist giving match officials or disciplinary committees reasons to influence a game’s outcome or to change the club’s league position (usually via a penalty kick, sending off, docked points, etc.): “The manager’s talk in those days wasn’t about ability... It was control your temper.”⁴⁷⁴ However, as a football club with private facilities attempting to access the ground graded LSL – where access was granted on the league’s approval as well as on sporting merit - Cavaliers were exposed to more elusive and robust forms of ‘ethnic closure’.⁴⁷⁵

Cavaliers had originally applied to play in the LSL back in 1982, when their new Parkview ground was first able to host matches. The LSL rejected their application, citing substandard facilities – despite other teams operating in its competition allegedly not possessing the same standard of facility as the Cavaliers club. Cavaliers applied again after the club had won the District League Premier and Junior Cup double in 1987. Despite promotion from the District League Premier to the LSL being widely regarded in local football ranks as ‘a natural’ progression’,⁴⁷⁶ Cavaliers’ application was again rejected due to ‘substandard’ facilities. Internal suspicions about processes of covert ‘ethnic closure’ were inflated when, that same season Cavaliers were accepted into the more prestigious and equally tiered, CML:⁴⁷⁷ “[The LSL said] we didn’t have the right facilities? [But] the Central Midlands League is higher than the Senior League, and at the first attempt ...we got in. Everything passed!” (Hugh)

Lusted has observed that the kinds of resistance, especially to black inclusion demonstrated here, were often linked to strong ideological and Victorian principles of

⁴⁷³ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p54

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. p68

⁴⁷⁵ Williams, “‘Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ p175

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

amateurism and sporting meritocracy.⁴⁷⁸ He argues that these principles underpin the imagined identities and imagined ideals of local CFAs.⁴⁷⁹ Lusted notes that one consequence of this is that generally, CFAs tend to adopt a 'horizontal' interpretation of difference.⁴⁸⁰ This somewhat narrow interpretation of difference is often unable to incorporate an appreciation of the various hierarchical power relations in sport which, for example, have been found to typically shape BAME individuals' and groups' sporting experiences.⁴⁸¹ As Polley points out, how can sport be understood to contain power relations if 'failure' 'success' and participation are all perceived to be solely determined by a 'stop watch'.⁴⁸²

Lusted explains that these core ideological principles of English fair play and meritocracy frequently lead CFAs to view themselves, their organisations and the football under their governance, as inherently meritocratic and routinely 'colour blind'.⁴⁸³ Subsequently, he found that 'political' policies designed to encourage or stimulate inclusion of a particular group, were often viewed with suspicion by those operating within English CFAs. They were seen to distort what was perceived to be an already even playing field.⁴⁸⁴ Put another way, these policies are often seen as handing an unfair advantage to certain groups - often at the expense of local white clubs and local white players: 'There's loads of money going into ethnic football... You see, it's not an even basis, I think they've [white clubs] got to take a lot of this' (FA council member 2006).⁴⁸⁵

In this light, we can speculate that Cavaliers' application to join the LSL would have been received with varying degrees of unease and general resistance from both the local CFA and from the wider white Leicester football fraternity, as George indicates:

⁴⁷⁸ Jim Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England* (PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2009)

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. Also see Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford, 1989); Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure & Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 2002)

⁴⁸⁰ Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England* p251

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. p218

⁴⁸² Polley, *Moving the goal Posts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* p143

⁴⁸³ Jim Lusted, 'Negative Equity? Amateurist Responses to Race Equality Initiatives in English Grass-Roots Football' in 2011 in Daniel Burdsey, eds., *Race, Ethnicity and Football: Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues* (London, 2011)

⁴⁸⁴ See Polley, *Moving the goal Posts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* Chapter 1: 'Sport, politics and the state'

⁴⁸⁵ cited in Lusted, *Sports Equity Strategies and Local Football in England* p290

It was a big thing in the [local] papers. “[Meadebrook Cavaliers] Football club gets ...whatever”...So obviously ...you get a lot of flak afterwards!... [Local] people thought we were getting hand-outs!

George’s point is that local knowledge of Cavaliers’ government assistance informed some of the local resistances experienced by the club and provides some context for the LSL’s rejection of Cavaliers. The sporting ‘ethnic closures’ experienced by Cavaliers locally, appeared to be bound up within the municipal politics of local football in Leicester.⁴⁸⁶ By the same token, his point also provides some illumination of why the resentments and closures experienced locally were perhaps less forthcoming in leagues and CFAs outside of Leicestershire. This is not to suggest, however, that Cavaliers’ players were not subjected to crude articulations of racism in the CML: “We went up to Newhall when we first got into the Central Midlands League... I couldn’t believe it... ‘Black this, black that... they pushed you that far.’”⁴⁸⁷

After three years playing outside of their home county, during which time Cavaliers finished runners up twice in the CML and reached the final of the Leicestershire County Cup (the elite cup competition for all clubs in Leicestershire, including Leicester City FC), Cavaliers were finally accepted into the LSL.⁴⁸⁸ This was despite little - if any - further work being done to the Parkview ground during their absence. This period outside of Leicestershire signalled the end of the playing careers of Cavaliers’ remaining founding players and many of *The Untouchables* team. For some of the retiring members, the denial of opportunity to prove *their* own sporting points in their local Senior League competition was particularly difficult to accept:

Look at it this way: we have won everything there is to win... and we still couldn’t get in. I feel very strongly about this... I’m hurt... because you had the lads from Meadebrooks... for 21 years... and we’ve never played in the Senior League. I personally felt very bitter by it because we felt we were denied *our* chance to prove that we can play organised football. They didn’t give us that!⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁶ Williams, “‘Cavaliers is A Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ p175

⁴⁸⁷ cited in Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p57

⁴⁸⁸ ‘Kid’s stuff for Emile’ *The Sporting Green* March 11, 1995

⁴⁸⁹ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p90-91

An increasingly heterogeneous ‘black club’

To return now to some rather wider questions. How did this wave of policies designed to facilitate greater ‘black’ access into mainstream and white collar employment in Leicester, impact on the social realities of Cavaliers’ membership? How did diverging social realities for a few within the club, impact on the club’s ability to continue to embody and reflect notions of black unity and solidarity? What emergent social tensions arose within its membership, in part facilitated by the same wave of policies that had enabled Cavaliers to evolve into a football club? These questions shape the parameters of this section. To demonstrate the fracturing impact of these policies on the second-generation consciousness within the club, however, it is necessary to say something first about the second-generation consciousness more widely, especially with regards to notions of black unity, comradeship and community progressiveness.

United we stand and divided we fall (Roots and Culture, 1990, Shabba Ranks)

All the black people stuck together (Darnell, second-generation, African Caribbean)⁴⁹⁰

It sounds silly now, but if there was a black group on *Top of the Pops* we didn’t turn the TV over till they were finished. Even if we wanted to, my mum wouldn’t let us (Andre, ex-Cavaliers player and Reserve Team manager)⁴⁹¹

The above quotes highlight that embedded within the identity politics of various second-generation African-Caribbeans living within 1980s Leicester, and Britain more widely, there existed a deep sense of ‘community’ solidarity. On this, Alexander elaborates: ‘[T]he basic tenet of this identity was solidarity, to each other as individuals and to the idea of the ‘black community’’.⁴⁹² Paul Gilroy expands on this, arguing that this notion of ‘community’ was not merely a political ideology for black people, but a ‘particular set of values’ which coalesced around notions of ‘co-operation’, ‘symbiosis’ and unity.⁴⁹³ As the above extract from Shabba Ranks’ 1990s hit song, *Roots and Culture* indicates, these values, and in particular, the notion of ‘black unity’, were

⁴⁹⁰ Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* p53

⁴⁹¹ Fieldwork Journal October 24, 2011

⁴⁹² Ibid. p51

⁴⁹³ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (London, 1987) p234

perceived by sections of second-generation African-Caribbeans to be intrinsic to enabling black Britain (and black communities elsewhere) to ‘escape’ and even ‘transform’ the marginalised conditions of existence which many were experiencing.⁴⁹⁴ Against this, Alexander points out that among the second-generation black Britons which she surveyed, imagined notions of ‘community’ were conceived typically, via ‘deep’ ideals of ‘horizontal comradeship’, brotherhood and community progressiveness.⁴⁹⁵

This provides a useful context. From here we can begin to consider how the creation of the Cavaliers club and the subsequent developments which took place in the immediate post-1982 period, symbolised both this image of black identity, and communicated this sense of community solidarity and community co-operation for this cohort of black men. Cavaliers’ new facilities had, for example, resulted in the club becoming something of a harbour organisation for other local BAME sports teams. By 1992, sport provision at Cavaliers included cricket, darts and netball teams and one women and two junior, football teams. By now Cavaliers were also frequently hosting various social functions. They had also established a formal community development arm of the organisation (see *Chapter 8*). By 1989, these expansions prompted the Cavaliers club to modify its name to *Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports and Social Club* (this was changed to *Meadebrook Cavaliers* in 1992). Within Alexander’s concept of “community”, we can consider how for various Cavaliers members, such developments ‘played out’ and ‘played back’ these strong – although at times overstated - notions of black unity, progressiveness and community solidarity.

I am not suggesting here that the black community in Britain, in Leicester, or even within the club was homogenous. Nor am I suggesting that it was harmonious. Academics such as Gilroy, Banton, Hall, Modood and Solomos, for example, have all highlighted the extent to which black identity politics are situational and multi-layered.⁴⁹⁶ They are often polarised by way of generation and gender (among other

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983) p7 cited in Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* p32

⁴⁹⁶ Gilroy, *Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*; Michael Banton, *Ethnic and Racial Consciousness* (2nd ed.) (London, 1997); Stuart Hall, ‘Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities’ in Les Back and John Solomos, eds., *Theories of Race and Racism* (London, 2000); Tariq Modood,

social divisions).⁴⁹⁷ The creation of new employment pathways into white collar public service jobs meant that Leicester's African-Caribbeans were also starting to become polarised by diverging socio-economic realities.

As something of a microcosm of black Leicester, the cultural and socio-economic divisions which resulted were manifest within the Cavaliers space. Cavaliers' largely black membership was also sub-divided by different club/team/project affiliations. Social tensions also existed within the management committee, which predominantly consisted of the group of older men who founded the club.

Evidence of this last point, is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the fact that between 1989 and 1993, four long-serving committee members departed the club – three of them in one year.⁴⁹⁸ Of the twelve management committee members listed in the club's 1991/1992 season match programmes, only five were officially still connected to the club by the 1999/2000 season. Thus, during the period between 1993 and 2000, the chairman, key committee members, founding players and ex-teammates, Bryan, Vinroy, Wilfred and Adrian - among others – all severed their official connections with the Cavaliers club. On their decisions to leave, Bryan explains: "There were internal politics and differences of opinion. And there began to be what appeared to be factions within the committee; [we] had, had enough!"

Against this backcloth, it is apparent that the Cavaliers club was a complex and often contradictory space. On one hand, achieving black football success, being a hub of black sport, and offering what we might describe as 'progressive' sporting and social provision for the wider black community, fed into popular ideas of black identity and community solidarity. On the other hand, the club was a space replete with intra-cultural conflicts, frictional power relations and diverging social and economic experiences. I want to use the remainder of this section to explore in more detail, how the Cavaliers club, earlier an unrivalled symbol of black solidarity and community progressiveness,

'Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptations in Britain: the Social context' in Michael Rutter and Marta Tienda, eds., *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms* (Cambridge, 2005); Solomos, *Race and Racisms in Britain* (3rd ed.)

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ '1993 Annual General Meeting (Minutes)' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

was by the end of the 1980s, being challenged by a diversifying social and economic black experience in the city.

Alexander observed how a particular group of black people who attended a London-based, African-Caribbean community centre were, at times, divided according to their different social and economic realities.⁴⁹⁹ On one side, were people who were employed typically by local government. According to Alexander, members from this group considered the centre's 'regular unemployed users' to be 'loafers'.⁵⁰⁰ On the other side, were African-Caribbeans who 'were unemployed or involved in the "alternative economy"[crime]'. Alexander connotes that members from this group often regarded those who were working as '...considering themselves "above" the rest of the users...'.⁵⁰¹ Pertinently, Alexander argued that notions of unity between these two groups were often absent and that this socio-economic-based division was '[t]he most potentially conflictual'.⁵⁰²

Founding Cavaliers member, Vinroy, argues that local government employment initiatives launched in the wake of the Leicester disturbances led to the emergence of similar types of employment-based – or class-facilitated – divisions/tensions within the Cavaliers club:

I remember when... Cavaliers needed somebody [to take on a management position]. So they asked me ...But then the chairman... said, "[I'm] worried because [I] won't be able to deal with letters [paper work]..." [But] we all grew up together. So they do operate a class system within there.

These distinctions were compounded by what some working class Cavaliers members argued was a newly emerging division of labour within the Cavaliers club – a perception which remains amongst some of Cavaliers working class members currently. Williams noted that, during its early history, Cavaliers had been 'highly valued' for giving local and often formally uneducated black men work-based experience by letting

⁴⁹⁹ Alexander, *The Art of Being Black*, Chapter 3: 'Work'

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. p37

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. Also see Karyn Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (California, 2007); Cherise A Harris and Nikki Khanna, 'Black is, Black Ain't: Biracials, Middle-Class Blacks, and the Social Construction of Blackness' *Sociological Spectrum* (30) 6 (2010) pp.639-670

⁵⁰² Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* p36

them ‘take on ...administrative role[s] in the running of’ the club.’⁵⁰³ Bryan, for example, recalls: “[At Cavaliers] I learned how to chair meetings and that helped me with my work, because I was expected to chair meetings at work. So, Meadebrook Cavaliers have opened many doors for me.”

Vinroy’s account suggests that during this period, opportunities of this kind were now preferably distributed to volunteers from Cavaliers’ newly emerging cohort of professionally qualified members. New financial pressures, largely brought about by their move to Parkview Lane, meant that from a business point of view, it undoubtedly made sense for the club’s leadership to draw on the expertise of its newly professionalised cohort of socially mobile black members. By the same token, this also meant that leadership positions and the club’s management committee quickly became ring-fenced – or at least was perceived to be by sections of the wider membership. One long standing Cavaliers member and ex-player, for example, argued that it was his lowly class-status – and not his white ethnicity – which was the reason why he was not on Cavaliers’ management committee: “I know that I’m too working-class for this committee” (Terry).⁵⁰⁴

Some interpreted these developments as a departure from the sensibilities of unity which had in part, made the committee - and the club more widely - symbolic of their black identities. Additionally, for founder member, Vinroy, the Cavaliers management committee increasingly represented what we might describe as a newly emerging middle-class black identity, which was underpinned by a markedly different set of cultural values and attitudes:

[Cavaliers] is for their own egos. It’s nothing to do with the community anymore... I can name many who have gone on to different professions... Now it’s all about their titles; ...their big jobs! ...Fair enough, they worked their way up: credit to them; big jobs in the Council... and what they do is they put themselves up there [on the committee]... [The community] doesn’t mean nothing to them ... And that’s the thing, it’s become a divided organisation.

⁵⁰³ Williams, “‘Cavaliers is A Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ p177

⁵⁰⁴ Fieldwork Journal June 9, 2010

Put another way, ideas of black individualism, self-interest and self-promotion were increasingly seen by some as a direct challenge to the notions of community obligation, black unity and black solidarity, which some argued had characterised the Cavaliers club thus far.⁵⁰⁵

The decline of Cavaliers' men's football teams and their attempts to appeal to a new generation of black players

The 1990s was the period when Cavaliers' ability to challenge at senior level football in Leicester came to an end. During the 1993/94 season, for example, Cavaliers' first-team won just three matches between Christmas and the end of the season.⁵⁰⁶ At that year's AGM Cavaliers' sporting impotency was a central issue.⁵⁰⁷ In response, pragmatic new club chairman, Hugh argued that if Cavaliers wanted to continue to compete at this level they would have to pay players to play for the club:

More and more we find ourselves not being able to attract the quality of talents that is required to compete at this level... A radical approach needs to be aimed at our football activities. The time may have finally arrived whereby contractual agreements may have to be put in place to secure quality first team success...⁵⁰⁸

Set against this proposition, the final section of this chapter connects Cavaliers' sporting decline in men's football, and in turn, the decision to become a player-paying club, to increasing competition for black players from local white clubs. It also argues that this development to pay players was an attempt to adjust to a new generation of local black players who possessed a different set of attitudes to the generation who had represented the club until this point.

⁵⁰⁵ Also see Harris and Khanna, 'Black is, Black Ain't: Biracials, Middle-Class Blacks, and the Social Construction of Blackness'

⁵⁰⁶ Meadebrook Cavaliers, 'Football Report – Season 1993/94' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

⁵⁰⁷ Meadebrook Cavaliers, 'Football Report - Season 1993/94' also see Brian Meadows, 'Commercial Report' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

⁵⁰⁸ Hugh White, 'Chairman's Report 1993/94' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

By the mid-1990s many local non-professional football clubs in Leicester (and Britain) were openly recruiting black players. This can be seen as the result of three interconnected developments: (1) The success of local black players and local black clubs such as, Cavaliers. (2) A decline in overt racism in local football. (3) The diffusion of central FA sports equity schemes into the grassroots game.⁵⁰⁹ Put another way, the structural forces and sporting exclusions which had previously buffered local black talent into the Cavaliers space were no longer as potent as they had once been. For Cavaliers this meant that the best local BAME players were no longer ‘naturally’ channelled into its club.

This situation was compounded by financial incentives being offered to local black players from clubs operating both above and at the same level as the Cavaliers club. This situation had a triple impact. As a ‘non-paying’ club, Cavaliers were often priced out of signing players at their level. Cavaliers were now losing their own players to other clubs at their level or marginally above (in 1995 the impressive Marlon Pobe left Cavaliers for local paying rivals Oadby Town).⁵¹⁰ As a non-paying club with low resources, financially, Cavaliers could not entice players away from other paying teams which operated at similar levels of competition. The Cavaliers club was in trouble. Against this, in 1994 the Cavaliers Chairman concluded that the payment of players was ‘the only way in responding to this new generation of footballers.’⁵¹¹

The accounts and testimonies below provide a useful snapshot of the financial situation of the club at this point.⁵¹² They also suggest that the new Chairman’s solution (to pay players) was financially unrealistic. An auditors’ report in 1994, for example, showed that Cavaliers operated at a loss of £1,699 that year (this was on the back of a £9,917 operational loss the previous year).⁵¹³ The sole cost of running football that season (men’s, women’s and two junior football teams - under 17s and under 13s), was over

⁵⁰⁹ Lusted, ‘Negative Equity? Amateurist Responses to Race Equality Initiatives in English Grass-Roots Football’

⁵¹⁰ ‘Second Best’ *Leicestershire Mercury* March 3, 1995

⁵¹¹ Hugh White, ‘Chairman’s Report 1993/94’ *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

⁵¹² Obtaining a substantive picture of the economic condition of club during this period is difficult. This is largely due to a combination of the club not publishing its accounts to its membership until the 1990s and due to a general lack of formal records (kept).

⁵¹³ D.J.Kent & Co. *Auditors’ Reports To The Members of Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports And Social Club* (Leicester, September 29, 1994)

four-times more than the total money received that year from external sponsorship (from *Dragon Stout* beer) and membership fees combined (£1894).⁵¹⁴ This, alongside a combination of rising maintenance costs of the ground, the clubhouse and the changing facilities, plus pressure from the LSL for its teams to have floodlights and suitable spectator facilities,⁵¹⁵ prompted Cavaliers' Vice President and Commercial Secretary, Brian Meadows, to state: 'We need more... benefactors if we are to hold our own at higher levels of competition...'⁵¹⁶ Against an apparent need for additional sponsorship to ensure that the club consistently operated in profit, the Cavaliers club appeared to be in no position to finance the payment of players.

The prospect of financial rewards for players was met with a range of ambivalent responses inside Cavaliers, and not just because the club could not afford to pay. Some members for example, considered this to be a natural and obvious progression for the black club. This was particularly so for those who wanted to see the Cavaliers club progress into the higher levels of the non-league game and even progress, eventually, into the Football League:

We had to move with the times. And clubs were paying players so Meadebrooks needed to jump on the bandwagon. They had to progress! I think the community side would have gone along with it ...the jump up in status to like semi-professional ...would have got the community together. (Everton)

I would like to see the club go into the football league... I would like to see them in the Football League before I die.⁵¹⁷

Others wanted Cavaliers to continue as a voluntary run organisation.⁵¹⁸ Some argued that it was quite possible to be both successful on the pitch *and* maintain a community orientated ethos.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Meadows, 'Commercial Report'

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid. p125

⁵¹⁸ The sporting resistances towards the professionalization of sports clubs have been explored implicitly and explicitly by various sports historians. See Jeff Hill, 'First-class' Cricket and the Leagues: Some Notes on the Development of English Cricket, 1900-40' *International Journal of the History of Sport* (4) 1 (1987) pp.68-81; 'I'll Run Him': Alf Tupper, Social Class and British Amateurism' *Sport in History* (26) 3 (2006) pp.502-519; Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and*

[I want] the club continue to be a community organisation, still run on the same voluntary system. I don't like players being paid... if you're a community organisation then things are going through the heart, it's not about money.⁵¹⁹

I'd like the club to become a community project, but ...I would [also] like to see the club walk out at Wembley one day.... For Cavaliers to walk up the Wembley tunnel. I'd die happy if that happened!⁵²⁰

For a few members, paying players represented something of an attack on the high-esteem in which they held the club. It was also an attack on their often embroidered memories of previous Cavaliers teams.

[P]eople like me and Vinroy also got frustrated because of what was happening... I use the word 'mediocre' players coming to the club, who they were paying. They were paying the senior players to play for Meadebrook Cavaliers!? It is gut wrenching... [Back] in the day, them guys couldn't stand with us! (Adrian)

Cavaliers' decreasing ability to attract the city's best black talent was not just about finance. It was also about the club adjusting to the arrival of a new generation of local black talent. Simply put, Cavaliers as a 'black space' was struggling to appeal culturally, to this new generation of players in the same ways as it had to the previous generation. Peach argued that during the 1970s and 1980s a more unified African-Caribbean minority ethnic identity emerged, especially among second-generation blacks.⁵²¹ This development, in effect, made true the old English view that all blacks were the same. Alexander highlights that the social rituals, physical artefacts and practices of consumption which emblematised this particular 'image' of black identity, coalesced around notions of black solidarity.⁵²² Additionally, she notes that these practices were often oppositional to a white culture and society which predominantly excluded them: 'To some extent, at this level, 'to be black' was simply 'not to be

Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914 (Cambridge, 1988); Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*; Richard Holt and Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain, 1945-2000* (Oxford, 2000)

⁵¹⁹ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p121

⁵²⁰ Ibid. p123-124

⁵²¹ Ceri Peach, 'The Force of West Indian Island Identity in Britain' in Colin Clarke et al, eds., *Geography and Ethnic Pluralism* (London, 1984)

⁵²² Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* p198

white'.⁵²³ Alexander observed that many black youths, for example, refused to listen to Radio One or Capital Radio, and seldom bought music from HMV (as these outlets were perceived to cater solely for white people). In the Leicester context, we might add to this list, a traditional black refusal to play for local-level white football clubs:

[P]eople say I am prejudiced because I cannot understand how or why we've got a lot of black players across the city now... [who] are playing for ...all these white teams! (Hugh)

It's simple! Young [black] people don't wanna' come out to Cavaliers [for a social night out] anymore... Not when they can go to [white] clubs in town.' (Noel, ex-Cavaliers player and second-generation African-Caribbean)⁵²⁴

The inability of various second-generation club members to understand why modern black youth in the city were increasingly opting to join white sports club and socialise in white spaces over the *black* Cavaliers club, suggests two things: (1) That practices which dually reflected black unity and opposition to white Britain were features within sections of Cavaliers' second-generation membership. (2) A noticeable number of the new generation of black footballers in the city possessed different attitudes towards notions of local sport, 'race' and black solidarity.

Criminologist, Gunter's ethnography of urban black youth, provides a useful analysis of the identity politics of a small cohort of third-generation black youth during the late 1990s. He argues that the basic tenet of the attitudes of his participants centred on the notion of 'survival'.⁵²⁵ In this context, the notion of 'survival' relates to the *individual's* ability to attain power, material wealth and neighbourhood status/respect.⁵²⁶ Importantly, Gunter's work also indicates that notions of community solidarity and symbiosis within his young participants appeared to be, at best, a secondary concern. In extreme examples, they were completely absent.

⁵²³ Ibid. p51

⁵²⁴ Fieldwork Journal October 16, 2010

⁵²⁵ Anthony Gunter, 'Growing Up Bad: Black Youth, 'Road' Culture and Badness in an East London Neighbourhood' *Crime, Media, Culture* (4) 3 (2008) pp.349-366 p349

⁵²⁶ Also see, Fiona Brookman et al, 'The 'Code of the Street' and the Generation of Street Violence in the UK' *European Journal of Criminology* (8) 1 (2011) pp.17-31

When compared to the ways in which community progressiveness and unity appear to be central features of the second-generation of British African-Caribbeans, this relative absence appears to be a significant distinction between the two generations. Obviously, the participants within Gunter's study consisted of black youths who lived in a more 'extreme' example of British urban life. His sample also consisted of participants from a younger wave of third-generation British African-Caribbeans to those which emerged within late 1980s Leicester. Nonetheless, we begin to see similar attitudes – or even the origins of the kinds of attitudes observed by Gunter – manifest in the frequent descriptions of the alleged individualism of local third-generation, African-Caribbean heritage players.

I think that we have struggled to attract players now based on how football has changed and where it's gone. It has become very much financial. If nobody was paying in local football ...[we] would not have a problem... If we offer nothing and another team offer two-pounds or five-pounds, he'll go after that money. Because it's about the kudos of saying, "somebody is paying me to play" (Hugh)

[A] few that came after us, had it [a cultural obligation to the club] in them... But now... the third-generation now... They haven't had to fight for anything... I don't think they can really take it in... You know because obviously they've been brought up, and the climate is not bad... schools are not bad... they probably didn't get the same racial taunts and bullying like we had to put up with... [W]e had to literally fight our way and stick together! (George)

I think people have moved on and have other interests [they'll do something else]...rather than doing something for Cavaliers or associated to Cavaliers. Whereas, before, we would just do it - because of the community. If there was a function at Cavaliers it was a big thing... If they put on a dance or function or whatever you went. Right now I am still talking about my generation... I think the [younger] second and third-generation wouldn't go if Cavaliers had a function or whatever. They haven't got that association... you know, the 20 year olds have got "No, let's go to Cavaliers just because they've got function on." They haven't got that association ...They just think: What is in it for me? ...Whereas before we'd just go, regardless... They just want everything; take everything; and give nothing... [You have to] *give* them something to play for (Everton).

Interestingly, issues such as individualism over community progression, where modern black players choose to play, an apparent lack of obligation to 'their' community's club, a diminishing awareness of Cavaliers as a space of black heritage, and the lessening

importance of 'race' as a key identity strand, have all become markers of difference between the two generations. Importantly, these generational differences were also confirmed by a number of Cavaliers' third-generation black players.

[T]o be honest it [race] don't really bother me. I don't really bother with those kinds of things. You know white, black. It's [about] ...people to be honest. (Marcus, 24, third-generation Black British: Caribbean)

[I don't think Cavaliers being a BAME club] attracted me... I wasn't too fussed about it [race] to be honest. (Riaz, 18, third-generation Asian Indian: British)

Given the increasing inability of Cavaliers to reach out to and attract black players for cultural reasons, for some Cavaliers' stalwarts, paying players was perceived as 'the only way in responding to this new generation of local and black footballers.'⁵²⁷ In the short term the latter won out: the Cavaliers team which finally won the Senior League Premier Division in 2000 was almost certainly paid to play. Although this arrangement finally brought Senior League success to the Cavaliers club – for the first and only time – for some of the second-generation members who were now ageing, paying players signalled the 'end' of local black football in Leicester as a reflection of black solidarity. For other members, it also signalled the end of this black football club as a space for expressions of a meaningful black cultural presence in the city.

Concluding comments

In the context of British African-Caribbean identity politics, the late 1980s and 1990s was a period where new types of social fractures began to emerge. The limited reach of a number of local government policies aimed to improve employment equality and re-enfranchise urban black communities, for example, meant that during this decade a marginal number of British blacks were experiencing social mobility and degrees of access into mainstream and white collar employment.⁵²⁸ As Alexander commented, this

⁵²⁷ White, 'Chairman's Report 1993/94'

⁵²⁸ John Benyon and John Solomos, 'British Urban Unrest in the 1980s' in Benyon and Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest*; 'The Roots Of Urban Unrest' in Benyon and

was a period in which increasingly new images of black identity emerged under the umbrella of the larger African-Caribbean minority ethnic identity.⁵²⁹ Against this rather patchwork picture, the chapter highlighted how the same wave of policies which had helped re-enfranchise some black youth and enabled the club to acquire its own ground, were also complicit in the emergence of new class-based fractions within Cavaliers' cohort of second-generation men.

It remains unclear whether or not these more class-centred divisions were actual or merely perceived. What is incontestable, however, is that certain political mechanisms enacted in the aftermath of the 1981 riots, enabled a few Cavaliers members to achieve upward social mobility and thus greater access into mainstream Leicester networks. The extent to which this altered these upwardly mobile members' perception of their black peers is debatable. It did represent, however, a change in the parameters of their wider social realities. This last point raises key questions about black social mobility and sport. For example: how has upward social mobility impacted on the meanings and centrality of sporting identities for these men? How has upward social mobility altered these second-generation African-Caribbeans' perceptions of contemporary blackness, and in turn, altered what they consider to be Cavaliers' role – especially as a site of resistance - within late-modern Leicester? These questions will be explored more expansively in *Chapter 7*.

This complex period within the history of the club – and perhaps within the history of the wider black community in Leicester and Britain – was not only characterised by what we might describe as emerging intra-generational divergences between Leicester's second-generation African-Caribbeans. It was also characterised by intergenerational discontinuities between second-generation and third-generation African-Caribbeans. Music and fashion have traditionally been ways in which black youth - like most youth - have often communicated their generational uniqueness.⁵³⁰ What Alexander describes as their own 'image' of blackness.⁵³¹ Highlighting the usefulness of sport in this way, Burdsey points out that analysing 'identities and affiliations in the context of sport [also

Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest*; Herman Ouseley, *The Way Forward: Proposals and Prospects* in Benyon and Solomos, eds., *The Roots Of Urban Unrest*

⁵²⁹ Alexander, *The Art of Being Black*

⁵³⁰ Andy Bennet, *Cultures of Popular Music* (Buckingham, 2001)

⁵³¹ Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* p198

help] to facilitate a wider sociological understanding of the nuances and complexities of young British... identities.’⁵³²

This view is particularly apt here. This new generation of British blacks adhered to new symbolisms. They were also less bound by the kinds of cultural obligations which had steered previous waves of black youth into the Cavaliers club. Combined with new cross-ethnic solidarities and an increasingly racially tolerant local football environment which began to offer local black youth new financial opportunities through playing the game, the Cavaliers club found itself in the uncharted territory of having to compete for local black talent. Black players who were no longer structurally buffered into the club or felt culturally obliged to play for it.

I have sketched out how these ‘positive’ social and cultural changes in local sport had inadvertently, begun to erode some of the cultural power of Cavaliers. But so, too, was a particular form of black agency. In many ways both were impacting negatively on Cavaliers’ continued capacity for collective community mobilisation. Thus, the decision to pay its footballers was in many ways a symptom of these wider developments. As a consequence, for various founder and older second-generation members attached to the Cavaliers club, this period signals the effective ‘end’ of local black football as a site for ‘playing out’ and also ‘playing back’ notions of a cohesive and meaningful black British culture.

⁵³² Burdsey, ‘‘If I Ever Play Football, Dad, Can I Play for England or India?’ British Asians, Sport and Diasporic National Identities’ p22

Figure 5.1: Entry form for the Caribbean Times Football Knock-Out competition (Bob Marley Cup)
(source taken from *Caribbean Times* Jan 31- February 6 1986)

Caribbean Times Football Knock-Out Competition 1986 (National)

Teams interested in participating in the Caribbean Times Football Knock-Out Competition are requested to fill out this form:

CARIBBEAN TIMES FOOTBALL KNOCK-OUT COMPETITION 1986 (National)

Name of Club (Block Letters)

Address (Block Letters)

.....

Tel No.

Secretary or Club Manager.....

Please Return to Caribbean Times Football Knock-Out Competition 139/149 Fonthill Road,
London, N4 3HF.

Order Caribbean Times

Caribbean Times printed and distributed by **Caribbean Times Ltd.**, 139/149 Fonthill Road, London

Chapter 6

Re-inventing Cavaliers

Recession, modernisation and processes of ‘respectablisation’

Introduction

In 2008 economies across the globe were destabilised by what has since been termed the ‘credit crunch.’ Hamil and Walters argue that this development brought about a global economic slowdown on a scale not witnessed since the great depression of the 1930s.⁵³³ Perhaps it is still too early, but there exists relatively little research on the impact of this recession on local level sport. Similarly lacking unsurprisingly are academic investigations into the ways in which the harsh economic conditions which characterise post-2008 Britain impacted upon those football/sporting spaces of specific BAME communities.

Economists, historians and some sociologists, however, have engaged more broadly with the impact of the economic downturn on *professional* football and *professional* sport. King for example, explores the potential and practical issues surrounding the attempts by football’s governing bodies to regulate Europe’s larger clubs in the wake of the credit crunch (he also details how fan-collectives and the terraces of some of Europe’s larger clubs have become spaces and forums for the expression of wider economic-based discontents).⁵³⁴ Horne discusses the impact of the credit crunch in relation to the sponsorship of professional sport.⁵³⁵ Hamil and Walters explore the resistance of certain Premier League clubs to accept the potential threat which the post-

⁵³³ Sean Hamil and Geoff Walters, ‘Financial Performance in English Professional Football: ‘An Inconvenient Truth’’ *Soccer & Society* (11) 4 (2010) pp.354–372

⁵³⁴ Anthony King, ‘After The Crunch: A New Era For The Beautiful Game in Europe?’ *Soccer & Society* (11) 6 (2010) pp.880–891

⁵³⁵ John Horne, ‘Sport in a Credit Crunched Consumer Culture’ *Sociological Research Online*, (14) 2 (2009)

2008 financial climate poses England's premier football competition.⁵³⁶ By contrast, Olsen provides an account which argues that professional football is possibly the most recession proof of all sports.⁵³⁷ This focus on the professional game contributes to populist perceptions that football in England is limited to some 92 professional clubs – and so are its economic problems.⁵³⁸

Thus, what we know about the UK's network of grass-roots football clubs in relation to the post-2008 economic climate is limited, especially with regards to Britain's BAME grass-roots football clubs. This leaves us with obvious but yet unanswered questions, such as: In what ways has the post-2008 economic climate impacted on grass-roots football clubs? What strategies have these clubs employed to circumvent the current conditions? How – and in what ways - have these employed strategies affected the purposes, objectives and cultural identities of these sporting spaces at both the operational and sporting levels?

To try to address these questions I explore Cavaliers' attempts to access new funding streams by becoming a registered charity organisation. Here I describe some of the ways in which the club's transition from a local sports club into a charity organisation forced Cavaliers to distance itself formally, from its original football-centred objectives. I also examine how this process redefined - radically – the roles and responsibilities of being a Cavaliers management committee member and the management committee experience within the club. Then I address how these changes impacted on the business of running football at the Cavaliers club – paying particular attention to how the club attempted to reduce the cost of men's senior football by modernising the senior football arm of the organisation. Attention is also paid to wider sporting and social influences which underpinned this process of modernisation. The final section explores the effects of this process of modernisation on the wider social, cultural and 'racial' identity of this previously unmistakable black club. I shall begin, however, by briefly outlining the

⁵³⁶ Hamil and Walters, 'Financial Performance in English Professional Football: 'An Inconvenient Truth'

⁵³⁷ Pammy Olsen, 'The World's Most Recession-Proof Sport' *Forbes* (185) 8 (2010) pp.156-157

⁵³⁸ Daniel Burdsey, "Forgotten Fields? Centralizing the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Men's Football Clubs in England" *Soccer & Society* (10) 6 (2009) pp.704–721

post-2008 economic climate, its impact on the private and public sector and in turn, its impact on sport in Britain.

Context

Britain in a new recession

The disappearance of various prominent high-street companies such as, Woolworths, alongside Gordon Brown's use of public finances to rescue a number of high-street banks and mortgage lenders in 2008, signalled the arrival of the global credit crunch in Britain.⁵³⁹ Data from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) indicates that during the period between 2008 and 2010, the British economy steadily shrank as the country entered a recession.⁵⁴⁰ Likewise, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted the fact that during this period unemployment in Britain rose from 2.4% to 4.2%.⁵⁴¹ The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the city of Leicester increased from 4.4% in September 2008 to 6.9% in 2009 (at point of writing this figure had remained above 6%).⁵⁴²

To plug the financial hole in the public finances, local government spending was drastically reduced. In 2009 and 2010 local councils across the East Midlands (and Britain more widely) planned for cuts to council budgets, which were predicted to be in the region of 5%-10%.⁵⁴³ Within months of being elected in May 2010, however, the Coalition Chancellor, George Osborne instructed councils to plan for cuts which would

⁵³⁹ BBC.co.uk 'UK Banks Receive £37bn Bail-Out' October 13, 2008

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7666570.stm>

⁵⁴⁰ BBC.co.uk 'UK Jobs Market 'Still On the Ropes'' February 15, 2010

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8515257.stm>

⁵⁴¹ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Housing and Neighbourhoods Monitor: Labour Market: Unemployment Rate 1991-2009' <http://www.hnm.org.uk/charts/labour-market.html>

⁵⁴² BBC.co.uk, 'Economy tracker: claimant count,' September 15, 2010

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10604117>

⁵⁴³ Polly Curtis, 'Councils Consider Plans to Shed 170,000 Public Sector Jobs' *The Guardian* March 1, 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/mar/01/councils-budget-cuts>

be at least 25%.⁵⁴⁴ One County Council Chief Executive described the severity of these new measures as '[un]like any ...ever seen before.'⁵⁴⁵ The combination of a recession, rising unemployment and deep cuts to public spending promised to impact on every area of political, economic and social life in Britain – including sport.

Public funded Sport and Football in the post-2008 recession

During this period, public funds allocated to sport and public sport bodies were significantly scaled back. In 2010, for example, Sport England and UK Sport reportedly faced budget cuts of 33% and 27% respectively.⁵⁴⁶ The School Sports Partnerships Programme's (SSPP) entire £160m budget was cut.⁵⁴⁷ Locally, this translated into the dismantlement of all 32 sport-education-partnerships in North-West Leicestershire alone.⁵⁴⁸ Following public outcry the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, postponed the termination of funding for the SSPP until summer 2011.⁵⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the severity of Osborne's public spending cuts prompted social commentators to predict that local 'sports clubs all over the country' and particularly those hoping to secure new funding would find themselves 'among the losers'.⁵⁵⁰

Professional Football was also affected by the recession – although to varying degrees and in various ways. In September 2009, for example, the collapse of West Ham United's kit sponsor, *XL Leisure*, left a significant gap in the East London club's

⁵⁴⁴ Polly Curtis, 'Budget 2010: Public-Sector Cuts A 'Declaration of War', Say Unions' *The Guardian.co.uk* June 6, 2010 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/22/budget-public-sector-cuts-unions>

⁵⁴⁵ BBC.co.uk, 'Lincolnshire Braced For 'Eye Watering' Budget Cuts' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/lincolnshire/8538400.stm>

⁵⁴⁶ Owen Gibson and Charlotte Higgins, 'Fears for London 2012 Legacy As School Sport Funding is the Big Loser' *The Guardian* October 21, 2010

⁵⁴⁷ Matt Slater, 'Community and School Sport bears Brunt of Spending Cuts' *bbc.co.uk* October 20, 2010 http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/front_page/9111865.stm

⁵⁴⁸ Simon Hart, 'School Sport: Pupils Pray Government Rethink Turns into a Reprieve' *The Telegraph .co.uk* December 6, 2010 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/schoolsports/8185033/School-Sport-Pupils-pray-Government-rethink-turns-into-a-reprieve.html>

⁵⁴⁹ Denis Campbell, 'U-turn as Michael Gove Agrees to Continue Funding School Sports System' *The Guardian.co.uk* December 20, 2010 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/dec/20/u-turn-michael-gove-school-sport-partnership>

⁵⁵⁰ Gibson and Higgins, 'Fears for London 2012 Legacy As School Sport Funding is the Big Loser'

finances as well as one on the club's shirts.⁵⁵¹ At 10.20am, February 26 2010, Portsmouth FC became the first Premier League football club to go into Administration.⁵⁵² In the local football context, the period between 2008 and 2010 witnessed sizable non-league clubs go out of business. This included clubs such as, East Yorkshire's Scarborough FC, the East Midland's Grestly Town FC, and Ilkeston Town FC and Norfolk's Kings Lynn Town FC (the latter after 131 years of existence).⁵⁵³ Smaller grass-roots football clubs such as those operating at - or around - the same level as the Meadebrook Cavaliers club (step 7) typically draw their finances from two sources: public bodies, such as Sport England and from private sponsors/benefactors. We might conclude then that many of these organisations were likely to be doubly impacted upon by the effects of the recession as economic cuts hit both the public and private sectors.

There is little available data on how and in what ways the post-2008 financial climate has impacted on Britain's network of grass-roots football clubs. The limited knowledge in this area is compounded by the fact that the experiences and affairs of most grass-roots football clubs are not considered to be especially newsworthy. The paucity of data makes it difficult to assess how applicable the findings outlined below are to other (BAME) sports clubs. Perhaps this chapter can offer a point of departure for other work in this area.

From a football club to a charity organisation

Why did Cavaliers become a charity organisation? The first decade of the new century brought various noteworthy changes to the Cavaliers organisation. In 2004, for example, the club erected floodlights around its main pitch. In line with what Bradbury has described as a growing trend among (BAME) grass-roots clubs in Leicester, Cavaliers also offered mini-soccer (provision for children under-10, of all genders and

⁵⁵¹ Matt Scott, 'West Ham Left Without Shirt Sponsor After Airline Collapse' *The Guardian* September 13, 2009 http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2008/sep/13/westham_united.premierleague

⁵⁵² James Callow, 'Portsmouth go into Administration' *The Guardian.co.uk* February 26, 2010 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2010/feb/26/portsmouth-premierleague>

⁵⁵³ BBC.co.uk, 'Have Your Say: The End for King's Lynn Football Club' *December 16, 2009* http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/norfolk/hi/people_and_places/newsid_8378000/8378954.stm

mixed ability).⁵⁵⁴ In 2007 Cavaliers received its last maintenance grant payment from the local council. As a consequence, the latter half of this period was also characterised by mounting debts and uncertainty over the future of the Cavaliers club.

Even with its final grant instalment from the local government in 2007, in that financial year the Cavaliers club operated at a loss of £6,577.⁵⁵⁵ The following year, however, Cavaliers recorded a £6,647 profit (or £70 once the previous deficit had been subtracted).⁵⁵⁶ This was however, largely due to a one-off £6,500 donation from an anonymous benefactor.⁵⁵⁷ An over 100% increase in the club's combined electricity and water bill (£3,357 to £7,011), in part, resulted in the Cavaliers club's finances for 2009 being £2,178 back in the red.⁵⁵⁸ By April 2010 the club's deficit had more than quadrupled to £10,606.⁵⁵⁹ On Cavaliers' worsening financial situation, club Chairman, Hugh commented:

Our organisation is at the very fringe of its existence. The past year has seen us struggle financially, and from all accounts, our continued participation in our chosen discipline, is seriously at risk...⁵⁶⁰

Without local government funding or an alternative source of revenue, alongside trying to operate within the harsh post-2008 economic landscape meant that Cavaliers faced bankruptcy. Recognising this, shortly after the maintenance grant expired Hugh - aided by Leicester City Youth Services Professional, Clive Tonge⁵⁶¹ - started the complex and protracted process of applying for Cavaliers to become a registered charity. In the summer of 2010, the Chairman announced to the Cavaliers' membership that charity status had been formally acquired.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁴ Steven Bradbury, 'From Racial Exclusions to New Inclusions: Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Football Clubs in the East Midlands of England' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (46) 1 (2010) pp.1-22

⁵⁵⁵ Meadebrook Cavaliers, *Unaudited Financial Statements For Year Ended 30th April 2008* p3

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Meadebrook Cavaliers, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Accounts To 30 April 2009*

⁵⁵⁹ Meadebrook Cavaliers, *Bills Payable at 11 April 2010*

⁵⁶⁰ Hugh White, 'Chairman's Report 2008/09' *Highfield Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 2008/9* (2010)

⁵⁶¹ Meadebrook Cavaliers, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Management Committee Minutes* February 28, 2010

⁵⁶² White, 'Chairman's Report 2008/09'

The following quotation taken from the Charity Commission website outlines some of the (financial) benefits which accompany charity status that undoubtedly would have attracted the Cavaliers club:⁵⁶³

Charitable status brings with it considerable advantages in terms of recognition and financial support. Charities have access to the full range of charity tax reliefs, including donor incentives of payroll giving and gifts of shares, wider exemptions on their own income and mandatory business rate relief. They also have access to greater funding opportunities...⁵⁶⁴

Charity status, however, also brought prescriptive and legally binding objectives and operational codes of practice around transparency. Furthermore, charity status would not be granted by the Charity Commission if *any* of the organisation's 'activities', 'purposes' and/or objectives were deemed to be 'not charitable'.⁵⁶⁵ Both instructions introduce us to some of the ways in which gaining charitable status initially impacted on the Cavaliers club and what areas were initially and explicitly affected - including the objectives of the Cavaliers club and its governance. Below I describe in more detail how these two features of the Cavaliers club were affected by its changed status.

New status, new objectives

What were the effects of charity status on the Cavaliers club? Since the 1980s Cavaliers' commitment to community work and its recognition as a space for formal community development within the city had steadily increased (see *Chapter 8* for more on this). Despite these wider activities, for some of the men inside the Cavaliers club the principle objective of the organisation remained the progression of its flagship male football first-team. This sentiment was echoed by the two men who had chaired the organisation during the period covered by this thesis: "There is a small school of thought that said we should be all-embracing and doing more in the community...

⁵⁶³ 'Setting Up a Charity' *Directgov.uk*

⁵⁶⁴ 'R11 - Charitable Status and Sport' *Charity Commission* (2003)

⁵⁶⁵ 'Setting Up a Charity' *Directgov.uk*

[However] providing football, essentially, is our main goal and priority...” (Bryan).
“The main activity within the club is football” (Hugh).⁵⁶⁶

Charity legislation, however, states that ‘the promotion of any particular sport, for its own sake’ as an end in itself - i.e. to play football solely for the purpose of winning football competitions - is not a charitable act.⁵⁶⁷ As alluded to earlier, charity status is not obtainable by any sporting organisation whose activities or purposes – aka objectives - are deemed uncharitable.⁵⁶⁸ Additionally, the Charity Commission connotes that any sports organisation which includes or excludes members for the sole reason of achieving success in ‘professional or elite sport’ will be considered unsuitable for charity status.⁵⁶⁹ Instead, the organisation (among other things) must be open ‘to anyone who wants to join, regardless of ability’ and not offer ‘payments or private benefits... to players.’⁵⁷⁰ In short, charity status is granted – typically - to those football spaces/centres which employ football as a vehicle to achieve a charitable end. This might include using football to improve the health and/or social wellbeing of an individual or group; or to use football as a means to facilitate a greater sense of local community cohesion or inclusion (see *Chapter 8*).

It was unlikely that the Cavaliers club in its then condition would have been considered suitable for charitable status. To circumvent this problem, in the first instance, Cavaliers redrafted its constitution in 2007. Its revised objectives now read:

The organisation shall have the following objectives:

- (a) To advance in life and help young people through:
 - (i) The provision of recreational ...activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve the conditions of life.
 - (ii) ...support and activities which ...enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals

⁵⁶⁶ Hugh White, ‘Chairman’s Report 1993/94’ *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

⁵⁶⁷ ‘The Review of the Registered Charities: Charity Status and Sport (RR11)’ *Charity Commission* (2003) para.4

⁵⁶⁸ ‘Setting up a charity’ *Direct.gov.uk*

⁵⁶⁹ ‘RR11 - Charitable Status and Sport’ *Charity Commission* (2003) para.35

⁵⁷⁰ ‘The Review of the Registered Charities: Charity Status and Sport (RR11)’ *Charity Commission* (2003) para.34

- (b) Provide recreational and leisure time activity in the interests of social welfare for people living in the area of benefit who have need by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social and economic circumstances with a view to improving the conditions of life of such persons.⁵⁷¹

Thus, the Cavaliers club formally re-presented itself as an organisation which no longer prioritised football success, but instead, was a community vehicle ‘designed to improve the conditions of life’ for ‘young people’. This change was not merely semantic. It was something which the club – as a charity - was now legally obliged to evidence through its activities, provisions and more importantly, through its expenditure. This last point turns our attention to the second highlighted outcome of the club’s new charity status; changes to its management committee.

From Management Committee to Board of Trustees

[For] ‘sportsmen’ ...eating, drinking and the art of conversation were integral parts of sporting life. For some... such social possibilities might well provide the prime reason for joining a club or for staying on... after the desire or ability [to play has passed]⁵⁷²

As a charity, it was Cavaliers’ management committee who were now legally responsible for ensuring that the organisation operated according to the guidelines outlined by the Charity Commission. Holt’s comments (above), however, remind us that sports clubs are spaces which are occupied and usually governed by people who are ex-players and/or sports enthusiasts. In many instances these members voluntarily take on such administrative roles and duties not because they enjoy bureaucracy, but because it is a way for them to become or remain involved in the unique atmosphere often found within sports clubs. This offers one explanation why the bureaucratic tasks which accompany club life are often viewed as annoying – although important – tasks, and are often begrudgingly fulfilled. This provides some additional context (beyond what

⁵⁷¹ Meadebrook Cavaliers, ‘Constitution’ (post 2007)

⁵⁷² Richard Holt, *Sport and Society in Modern France* (London, 1981) p150

Williams describes as a ‘black approach to work time and leisure’⁵⁷³ and suggests why the administrative formalities of club life at this black organisation were frequently conducted in a more relaxed manner with little formality (especially when compared to how the same activities are conducted within the professional sphere). Formal appointments, such as AGMs for example – although usually well attended - were often postponed for months at a time, until a convenient date for the management committee members was found (This has resulted in Cavaliers’ AGMs currently running some 12 months behind schedule). Furthermore, when meetings were conducted they would often continue long into the night.⁵⁷⁴

[Meetings] would start at seven and go on past midnight! ... Professional meetings wouldn’t happen like that! As a professional, you don’t go to no meeting till d’em kind-a ch’upid times! (Adrian)

Acquiring charity status, however, quickly expunged the informal nature which had previously characterised the way the club was governed and how the management committee had behaved. As a registered charity with an annual income in excess of £10,000, for example, no longer could Cavaliers’ AGMs be held at the discretion or convenience of the management committee. These were now formally organised and legally pertinent events, required by law to be conducted within a set time frame and their minutes provided to the Charity Commission in ‘a timely fashion’.⁵⁷⁵

Re-titled, Charity Trustees, Cavaliers’ management committee members were also legally required to operate the organisation within rigid and legally binding parameters. Trustees, for example, were legally obliged to ‘...act prudently and reasonably in administering the financial affairs of the charity’.⁵⁷⁶ This included having a transparent ‘long term strategy for the achievement of its [charitable] objectives which covers finance, operations and governance...’⁵⁷⁷ For some of the ageing sports enthusiasts at Cavaliers this meant having to engage with otherwise unfamiliar business/financial

⁵⁷³ John Williams, ‘“Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game Without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (Aldershot, 1994) p164 also see Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (London, 1987)

⁵⁷⁴ Williams, ‘“Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’

⁵⁷⁵ ‘The Hallmarks of An Effective Charity’ *Charity Commission* (2010) p10

⁵⁷⁶ ‘Managing Financial Difficulty and Insolvency in Charities’ *Charity Commission* (2010) p24

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p6

mechanisms, such as spread-sheets, flow-charts and cash-flow projections.⁵⁷⁸ This also meant that if the Cavaliers club was to become insolvent and it was proven in court that the board of trustees did not a) have adequate systems in place which provided accurate ‘financial projections of the charity...’⁵⁷⁹ and b) had not acted appropriately upon such information, the organisation could be seized:

If you can’t balance the books then you have to take a decision as to whether the organisation continues: whereas if you are informal, the liabilities aren’t really the same... (Emanuel, Cavaliers Management Committee member)

Furthermore, in such an event and as trustees of a failed or mismanaged charity organisation, Cavaliers’ cohort of volunteers could be held legally and personally accountable (punishable by fine or imprisonment). It is unclear whether or not the new levels of accountability that accompanied charitable status were fully appreciated by the club Chairman. It is apparent, however, that many of the other management committee members were not fully informed of what charity status entailed – beyond being able to access additional funding. After asking how charitable status would affect the ‘trading arm’ of the club, for example, management committee member, Ordell was informed that ‘if he wanted further clarity’ it was down to him to ‘contact a charity expert for advice’.⁵⁸⁰

Those on the committee who were familiar with charitable status, however, expressed concerns over the club’s intention to go down this route. In his 2009 report, *the Meadebrook Cavaliers Governance Proposal*, management committee member, Emanuel, advised that the committee should delay Cavaliers’ charity status application:

The benefits of charity registration for the club would benefit from further investigation. From the author’s initial assessment of the present operations/governance systems, the club would have to significantly develop its policies, procedures, systems and practices to ensure they comply fully with the regulations governing charities... A full appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining charitable status should therefore be considered by the Management Committee...⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ Fieldwork Journal June 9, 2010

⁵⁷⁹ ‘Managing Financial Difficulty and Insolvency in Charities’ *Charity Commission* (2010) p6

⁵⁸⁰ Management Committee, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Management Committee Minutes* February 28, 2010

⁵⁸¹ Emanuel Chiedozie, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Governance Proposal* (24.1.2010) para. 2.7

Notwithstanding this view, in June 2010 the Chairman announced that charity status had been formally acquired (his dismissal of various members' concerns was perhaps typical of a man who had used the Frank Sinatra's song lyrics, "To think I did all that; and... I did it my way", to formally summarise his twenty-year tenure as the club's chairman at the club's 2009/10 AGM).⁵⁸² The Chairman warned the committee that charity status came with certain conditions which meant that the club's deficit had to be addressed immediately: '[T]here is a proviso. Most funders do not look favourable to applicants with financial deficit. This is something we need to address as a matter of extreme urgency...'⁵⁸³ He concluded that to receive funding as a charity, the Cavaliers club had to demonstrate it could manage its finances by 'balancing its books.'⁵⁸⁴

Cavaliers' largest expenditure was its football provision. According to the club document, *MBC football costs*, the cost of senior men's football provision (first and reserve teams) accounted for 80% of the club's annual football expenditure.⁵⁸⁵ Despite the historic centrality of the men's football team to the identity of the Cavaliers organisation *as a football club*, as a charity organisation men's senior football provision represented a non-charitable expenditure, which now posed a threat to the entire organisation's immediate and long-term future: 'If the first team does not become financially viable ...then they should be disbanded ...If someone has a limb which has gangrene – you cut it off!' (Emanuel).⁵⁸⁶

As a football club Cavaliers senior men's team had been the priority of the organisation for the previous 37 years. Set against increasing debt and the new pressures brought by charity status, it was increasingly difficult for Cavaliers' board of trustees to continue to ignore such a costly, albeit socially significant, investment. At the end of both the

⁵⁸² Hugh White, 'Chairman's Report 2009/10' *Highifeld Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 2009/10 season* (2011)

⁵⁸³ White, 'Chairman's Report 2008/09' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 2008/9*

⁵⁸⁴ It should be noted that the Charity Commission's judgment on the prudence of Cavaliers as a charity organisation, would not hinge solely on whether-or-not it operated at loss. Contrary to the chairman's claims, the Charity Commission and potential funders would be suspicious if a charity organisation continuously posted year-on-year profits. (Fieldwork Journal November 12, 2010)

⁵⁸⁵ Emanuel Chiedozie, *MBC Football Costs* (2010)

⁵⁸⁶ Fieldwork Journal June 9, 2010

2009/2010 and the 2010/11 seasons, private meetings were held to discuss – among other things - the feasibility of continuing to run senior football the following season. As indicated by Emanuel, to continue, senior men’s football provision at the Cavaliers club had to modernise - or be removed.

Policing youth: Modernisation, hegemony and local black football

I now want to now sketch out some of the ways in which the club’s transformation into a charity organisation and the resultant new financial pressures impacted on the business of running senior men’s football at the Cavaliers club. Throughout much of its history Cavaliers’ players were typically drawn from a working class, African-Caribbean demographic. Since its founding in 1970, the Cavaliers organisation has also contained a significant number of men whose wider lifestyles could be described as ‘socially deviant.’ As one second-generation club member explained: “There is a different kind of people [in the club and Leicester]... which I grew up among who were involved in crime” (Vinroy). Current first-team player, Marcus’ account indicates that this association continued into the first decade of the twenty-first-century.

[W]hen I first went to Cavaliers [in 2003]... a lot of the senior... players were in gangs and stuff like that... [O]bviously it’s Meadebrook Cavaliers. So there was a lot of guys from the Meadebrooks area. And they deal with ...drugs [and are] unruly; ...carrying all kinds of weaponry and that.

From the outset, the Cavaliers football management had recognised that this association came with a likely monetary cost. Provoked players would often fight against the opposition and at times “with each other” (Bryan). Players’ limited access to money meant that it was often the club which paid the resultant fines imposed by the local County Football Association. According to the ex-Chairman, on one occasion this issue even threatened the club’s ability to continue to offer football provision

In the 80s we incurred fines from the FA to the tune of £80 and in those days it was a lot of money for a black football club to find. We hadn’t got it and we couldn’t afford it. The rules were if you couldn’t pay your fines then you can’t play football. So at that point we nearly disbanded because we hadn’t got £80 in the kitty... Ade [club member] dipped in to his own pocket and paid the £80 so

we were able to carry on ...Otherwise we had no other way of finding the money... (Bryan)

On various occasions Cavaliers had attempted to constrain its sometimes problematic – but highly talented – youth. This was usually done by temporarily dropping players from the first-team. Some of the sanctioned players rejected outright this kind of policing and in turn left the club – often for other local and more tolerant BAME clubs:

Even then we started to expect and demand a higher level of discipline ...and so some people rebelled ...hence why those other [local BAME] clubs shot up... People...went to play for [them] ... [F]antastic players. We lost some good players.

These early attempts to ‘manage’ its youth were fleeting. This was usually because they often compromised Cavaliers’ ability to achieve success. Also, the idea of black people excluding other black people undoubtedly contravened the kinds of powerful notions of black solidarity and unity held among sections of this cohort of second-generation black men (discussed previously). This may also go some way to explaining why, even though the club strived for better discipline, no ‘deviant’ player was ever *asked* to leave the Cavaliers club: “No, no no! We never asked anybody [to leave]. Sometimes it came as a surprise that so-and-so had left” (Bryan).

Director of Football, Louis, explains that prior to the expiry of its maintenance grant, the financial cost of the inclusion of deviant youth was something which had largely been overlooked by the club – a cost which he claims in 2005, was in the region of £2,500. Once the grant had expired in 2007, however, this sort of outlay quickly became unsustainable. Something had to give. Louis pointed out that the amount which the club paid in fines had been reduced to £230 in 2010. He credited this primarily to a fundamental change in the club’s philosophy for achieving sporting success. This had been implemented largely by himself, a few ex-Cavaliers players (now coaches) and two newly imported coaches/managers for the men’s senior section.

This new ‘blue-print’ for football success coalesced around ideas of better disciplined and more responsible players as a prerequisite for football success – and not something which hindered it. For some, especially Cavaliers’ newly imported coaches, this meant that players who were identified as being deviant or who failed to reach these new

standards of respectability should be excluded from the club. A knock-on-effect of this dual process of ‘respectabilisation’ and ‘moral cleansing’ is that Cavaliers now possess a first-team which consists of more responsible players who conduct themselves ‘properly’ on the pitch and, if sanctioned, pay their own fines:

Now any players that do want to play for us have to realise that they have a responsibility. And I think the current group of players have got that... I’m proud of them. And I am pleased with them because they have a level of maturity and responsibility that wasn’t here before. And that’s why financially the club has struggled [in the past]...” (Louis)

It is important to note, however, that much of the agenda to ‘manage’ deviant youth at Cavaliers actually surfaced nearly half-a-decade *before* the Cavaliers’ maintenance grant ceased. Undoubtedly, some of this process was in preparation for this moment. It is also apparent, however, that while the new financial pressures placed on the club may have justified - and even intensified – Cavaliers’ focus on better management of its deviant youth it was not the sole cause of it. Against this background, the remainder of this section aims to demonstrate that the club’s focus on managing youth during this period was also bound up with wider sport and class hegemony issues.

Hegemony, Counter Hegemony and Cavaliers

How has dominant sport hegemony infiltrated the Cavaliers club? In what ways has it underpinned the project to make Cavaliers’ players more respectable or alternatively, to exclude them? Originally, Cavaliers was constructed and often imagined in opposition to white and mainstream English football (see *Chapters 4* and *5*). Put another way, with regards to the ethnicity of most of its players and to its approach to playing football, the Cavaliers club was a space of sporting counter hegemony.⁵⁸⁷ But there has been a

⁵⁸⁷ Jennifer Hargreaves, ‘Theorising Sport: An introduction’ in John Hargreaves, eds., *Sport, Culture and Ideology* (London, 1982); Eric Dunning, ‘Figurational Sociology and Sociology of Sport: Some Concluding Remarks’ in Eric Dunning and Chris Rojek, eds., *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter-Critique* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1992); Richard Giulianotti, ‘Introduction: Sport and Social Theorists – A Plurality of Perspectives’ in Richard Giulianotti, eds., *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (Hampshire, 2004); David Rowe, ‘Antonio Gramsci: Sport, Hegemony and the National-Popular’ in Giulianotti, eds., *Sport and Modern Social Theorists*

noticeable increase in the levels of engagement between Cavaliers' coaches and white mainstream football, especially during the last decade-and-a-half.⁵⁸⁸ Typically, this has taken place through sports leadership schemes, formal coaching courses/qualifications and youth work. In many ways, this greater exposure has contributed to the production of new and more mainstream philosophies of professionalism, inclusion and development among some of Cavaliers' coaches and within the club more widely.⁵⁸⁹

This development was particularly noticeable within the sporting philosophies embraced and endorsed by the club's Director of Football, Louis. A UEFA B licenced coach, he is employed by a Premier League Football Academy, where this kind of focus on professionalism and discipline can be viewed as part of what we might describe as the 'orthodoxy' of modern professional sport. This approach is neatly captured in Surrey Cricket Manager, Chris Adams' explanation for his team's CB40 success in 2011:

We've been dismantling a team and building foundations for two years now... One of the goals is to develop great cricketers, but also great people as well. So it's coming together... for the team and they'll win many more trophies.⁵⁹⁰

These kinds of professional sport philosophies are clearly echoed within Louis' blueprint for future football success at Cavaliers:

I am interested in producing players ...More importantly than that, producing good people... So that phrase encapsulates everything... What I am interested in is producing footballers and good, well rounded young people. [I]t requires a certain culture. It requires not just the players changing, but the managers and coaches of the teams changing.

⁵⁸⁸ An indicator of the increasing number of FA qualified coaches within the club was Cavaliers' successful attainment of Chartered Trust Standard by 2005. This award can only be obtained providing the majority of coaches within the organisation hold at least an FA level 1 coaching qualification. See 'Happy 35th Birthday Meadebrook Cavaliers' *Leicester Mercury* August 20, 2005

⁵⁸⁹ Steven Bradbury, 'Racisms, Resistance and New Youth Inclusions: The Socio-Historical Development and Shifting Focus of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Football Clubs in Leicester' in Daniel Burdsey, eds., *Race, Ethnicity and Football: Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues* (London, 2011)

⁵⁹⁰ 'Good Morning Sports Fans' Sky Sports News September 18, 2011

As this account indicates, part of this process also included Cavaliers seeking out and drafting in a small number of black coaches who had had full playing careers in the (semi) professional game and who were in Louis' words, "professional people" in their wider careers. These new coaches (Richard and Lionel) would act as role models for Cavaliers' players and play an intrinsic part in changing the existing culture within the club.

[They] didn't have with [them], what I considered to be the blinkered attitude of many of the players locally... They've played high-level football... [and] they are... professionals; they're educated people. They brought with them a certain maturity that the club needed. (Louis)

As members of the first wave of second-generation black sportsmen to access mainstream local football, Cavaliers' new coaches also displayed a subscription to – and promotion of – a different sporting hegemony to Cavaliers' other coaches – most of whom had only accessed mainstream football through coaching courses. This hegemony did not coalesce around the social development and 'role model' discourses promoted by government and other sport bodies.⁵⁹¹ It was, instead, an example of the patriarchal and hyper-masculine hegemonies practiced *within* semi and professional football clubs, especially during the 1980s and 1990s - when these coaches were elite level players.

Parker has observed how the young professional footballers within his 1990s study practiced and adhered to specific forms of masculine hegemony.⁵⁹² Subsequently, their sporting identities were often constructed in opposition to 'femininity and subordinate

⁵⁹¹ Arguably, New Labour's strong discourses about sport's capacity to develop Britain's young socially, have informed and underpinned much of the community centred youth-work and sport-work which has taken place over the last decade. In 2002, for example, the Labour Government described sport as 'part of a basket of measures' which have contributed 'to improved educational outcomes, reduced crime and greater social inclusion'. Additionally, authors such as Warren Payne et al, have highlighted how sports coaches at all levels, are being used to engage often problematic youth, and to help instil within them core social skills and values applicable to 'non sporting' contexts. See The Department for Culture, Media and Sport/ Strategy Unit, *Game plan: A Strategy for Delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity Objectives* (London, 2002) p14 and Warren Payne et al, *Sports Role Models and Their Impact on Participation in Physical Activity: A Literature Review* (University of Belfast, 2003) p22, respectively.

⁵⁹² Andrew Parker, 'Soccer, Servitude and Sub-cultural Identity: Football Traineeship and Masculine Construction' *Soccer and Society* (2) 1 (2001) pp.59-80

forms of masculinity'.⁵⁹³ He connotes that 'males failing to enact the basic physical and verbal masculine expectations of football life - ...drinking, sporting prowess and the vehement pursuit of women' would frequently face 'a barrage of abuse' (we can also add to this list the domination of women).⁵⁹⁴ Additionally, Long and Hylton argue that various cricketers would often use post-match social rituals, such as staying for a drink in the bar after games, as a way of identifying within their squad those who were 'team men' (simply speaking, those who attended these functions were seen as good teammates and those who were frequently absent were not).⁵⁹⁵ King argues that refusal to comply with these kinds of cultural expectations would often result in players being labelled a troublesome element within the group – and ultimately discarded by the club.⁵⁹⁶ Narrow perceptions of normality and harsh penalties for deviancy similar to those observed within mainstream football were noticeably present in the reasons given by Cavaliers' new coaches for the exclusion of a number of local black players. The explanation offered for the exclusion of local player, is illustrated by the story of Joe:

[Joe] never stayed for a drink. He blew out the end of season night out... I tell you what he's like, when his baby was born his missus' mum told him to wait outside!? Do you think Jenny's [the coach's partner] mum could have told me that? No character... He didn't wanna' mix with us... Look when we had that penalty shoot-out against United. Everyone was huddled together and he was standing on his own" (Richard)⁵⁹⁷

It is important to note that the labelling of subordinate males as deviant was also indicative of a particular male sub-culture which was present within the Cavaliers club long before it imported black players who had grown up within mainstream and white working class football clubs. This is evident in one ageing club member's perhaps embroidered recollections of his own generation of black footballers:

[O]ne particular manager took his wife to the hospital when she was in labour. They said that the baby is not due for another few hours. So we left her there and came back to the match... [P]eople might say this is chauvinistic. People might

⁵⁹³ Ibid. p60

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. p75

⁵⁹⁵ Jonathan Long and Kevin Hylton, 'Shades of White: An Examination of Whiteness in Sport' *Leisure Studies* (21) 2 (2002) pp.87-103 p91-93

⁵⁹⁶ Colin King, 'Play the White Man' www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/pdf/king.pdf (2000)

⁵⁹⁷ Fieldwork Journal October 10, 2010

say this is old and they say I'm from the old generation, but I cannot understand how a woman is gonna' tell a man that they can't do certain things! ...It's ridiculous. It can't happen. I'm sorry... It can't be done! (Hugh)⁵⁹⁸

As part of the club's attempts to manage deviant players, a number of local players have now been asked to leave - and not just because they were reluctant to pay fines. Thus, for Cavaliers' new coaches the notion of a 'respectable player' – commonly referred to as a 'good lad' (Lionel) - appears to also be bound up within narrow perceptions of a hyper-masculine hegemony similar to those which characterised many mainstream and white football clubs during the 1980s and 1990s – a possible hangover from the coaches' own exposure to such cultures as elite level players. It also appears that within this group of coaches' interpretation of Cavaliers' blueprint for success, in addition to excluding players who refused to pay fines, meant players who contravened these specific ideas of normality were also considered to be an element which required removing from the club.

Respectability, Class divisions and Cavaliers

I have attempted to demonstrate that currently, there exist two dominant philosophies to managing deviancy in Cavaliers' senior men's team (embraced by the club's cohort of second-generation African-Caribbean-heritage coaches): (1) To turn deviant young men into more 'responsible' players and, in turn, into respectable people. (2) To exclude deviant players from the club. These two approaches are for the most part, embraced by Cavaliers' local coaches (most of whom had playing careers at Cavaliers) and those imported from outside of the club (who had careers as semi-professional footballers) respectively.

The account from one of Cavaliers' imported coaches, Richard, highlights the presence of this division within this arm of the club. It also provides a useful introduction to the nascent tensions which, at times, exist between Cavaliers coaches and players and at other times, between the two sets of coaches:

⁵⁹⁸ Also see Williams, 'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England'

[W]hen I took over they had a young side, and had a lot of idiots, a lot of G-units as I say [deviant black youth]...I don't know... a few of the elders over there, want to give them [deviant black youth] a chance. I think when... you're dealing with 24/25 year-old-men ...they're old enough to have learned their lessons. So I'm not interested. There's no point!

The reasons which underpin these two groups of men's differing perceptions and approaches to managing deviant youth are complex and myriad. These might include, for example, influences from discourses which permeate their wider working or social spaces. Some of these factors, such as those present within local sport, have been explored already. Others I will touch upon below. I want to spend the majority of this section, however, illustrating how these two approaches to managing deviancy appear to also be bound within wider issues of black class mobility and its influences on notions of black obligation towards less mobile and more deviant members within the black community.

Most of what is known about the black middle-classes currently derives from studies undertaken in the United States. This prompts us to first acknowledge the many historical and discursive differences between black America and black Britain. Nonetheless, these insights do provide a useful class sensitive and black theoretical schemata in which to contextualise both Cavaliers' 'new' impetus in producing 'responsible' young black men. It also provides some context to better understand the decision of certain coaches to either work with or dismiss deviant black youth.

Lacy argues that the black middle classes can be divided – crudely - into two divisions; (upper) 'middle-class' and 'lower-middle-class' black people.⁵⁹⁹ Pattillo-McCoy adds that typically, the latter either grew up within – or reside within - locales which are characterised by both black affluence and black poverty. These are neighbourhoods where 'gang leaders and politicians' live together.⁶⁰⁰ Additionally, Lacy argues that contact between lower middle and working class blacks also takes place via this group of middle class black people's clustering in community based or 'blue-collar' (semi-

⁵⁹⁹ Karyn Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (California, 2007) p2; Mary Patillo-McCoy, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* (Chicago, 2000)

⁶⁰⁰ Patillo-McCoy, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* p68

skilled manual) professions (or through their alacrity for voluntarism).⁶⁰¹ Patillo-McCoy elucidates that one consequence of the high levels of social and work-based contact between these two ‘classed’ groups is that generally, lower middle class black people express a more ‘relaxed’ – albeit conservative - interpretation of working class deviancy.⁶⁰² Another consequence of this close proximity, according to Sampson and Milam, is that this group of middle class blacks do not tend to perceive themselves as separate from their deviant and/or working class peers. Instead many consider all black people as part of one community.⁶⁰³ This sense of ethnic ‘one-ness’ often facilitates – or maintains - within this group a strong sense of obligation to help and to lead the less privileged members of the black community.⁶⁰⁴

Unlike their lower middle class peers, the black *upper* middle classes usually consist of white collar workers, such as ‘doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, and corporate managers, occupations that require at least a bachelor’s degree’.⁶⁰⁵ In most instances, this group live alongside white middle class peers in neighbourhoods that are characterised solely by affluence.

This distinction is applicable to the group of second-generation black coaches who currently drive the Cavaliers senior men’s teams. Cavaliers’ local and now moderately middle class coaches started off within the Meadebrooks area and grew up alongside - and were at times themselves involved within - deviant pockets of the community. Alternatively, Cavaliers’ newly imported and more middle class black coaches grew up in professional households outside of black Leicester (each coach’s father, for example, possessed postgraduate qualifications, and in turn, had had successful careers in well paid professions which required this level of expertise/training). They currently live in largely affluent and white suburban locales; they went to university; and they are in white collar professions (‘professional people’). Henceforth, I will employ Lacy’s ‘lower’ and ‘upper’ middle class categories to describe Cavaliers’ local and newly imported coaches, respectively.

⁶⁰¹ Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* p2

⁶⁰² Patillo-McCoy, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* p71

⁶⁰³ William A Sampson and Vera Milam, ‘The Interracial Attitudes of the Black Middle Class: Have They Changed’ *Social Problems* (23) 2 (1975) pp.153-165

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. p159

⁶⁰⁵ Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* p3

Largely through their close social, employment and geographic proximity to working class and deviant black youth, many of Cavaliers' now moderately successful and local older black men continue to display strong senses of ethnic and social solidarity with their more socially static and often deviant younger peers. This is despite their upward mobility. Furthermore, they also express strong sentiments of obligation towards - and a commitment to help and guide - deviant black youth, similar to those identified within the lower middle classes by Sampson and Milam:

[W]e have to be a parent! ...Which means people running the club have to take a close look at themselves. Am I setting an example? ... Our young black boys in particular are killing each other [...] because they've got no role models ...Now clubs like Meadebrook Cavaliers, we have a role to play... (Louis)

I know [dual-heritage: black and white] Marley didn't [have contact with his black father or with other black people] ...because he lives in a predominantly white area. All his peers were all white lads... I believe that's why he had problem at school... [H]e would get into a lot trouble...But now he's developed relationships with other black guys from being a part of Meadebrook Cavaliers. I know he feels good about it. And he can also recognise his identity a little bit more... (Derek)

Harris and Khanna argue that the different kinds of social capital which accompany these two different middle class realities (for example, the types of educational, professional and social networks unique to each social reality) translate into very different ways in which black people from the upper and lower middle classes perceive their own realities; the realities of other middle class people; and importantly, how they perceive the working class and socially deviant groups.⁶⁰⁶ Unlike their lower middle class peers, for example, Cavaliers' upper middle class coaches often articulated a more 'individualist' perception, viewing their privileged realities to be the result of their own efforts at self-improvement.⁶⁰⁷ They also expressed a zero-tolerance approach to managing deviant youth. Richard, for example, would frequently make the case that local coaches who adopted what we might describe as a more 'liberal' attitude/approach

⁶⁰⁶ Cherise A Harris and Nikki Khanna, 'Black is, Black Ain't: Biracials, Middle-class Blacks, and the Social Construction of Blackness' *Sociological Spectrum* (30) 6 (2010) pp.639-670 p641

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. p160

to managing deviancy were a contributing factor to the club's problem with deviant youth:

The way René is [a player who Cavaliers' new coaches perceive as being particularly deviant] -it's their fault [the other coaches]! They all... protect him. He'll never learn like that!⁶⁰⁸

For club coach, Lionel, the only way to deal with deviant players was that, "them mans must go!"⁶⁰⁹ The determination to remove deviant members from the club also demonstrated that Cavaliers' new upper middle class coaches held noticeably more strongly conservative views than their locally-based lower middle and working class peers. This included perceiving deviant young men as being help-*less* and an element in which they had little or no interest. They were regarded as anathema to a successful Cavaliers: ,

When Lionel told me that he [one of their teammates] had just come out of prison for armed robbery, I was like, "Hey?!" I just told Louis to take me off. I don't want to play with people like that! (Richard)⁶¹⁰

It is important to note that these class-based tensions and divisions were not obvious or even present at all times. Often, these tensions were overshadowed by frequent displays of sporting, social and cultural unity and solidarity. Cavaliers' imported managers for example, would frequently and staunchly claim that they were as 'working class' as the next (second-generation) black man – and proud of it. It is also apparent, however, that there also existed micro-political tensions and many 'under the surface' divisions within this section of the club. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that these were often underpinned by markedly different sensibilities and attitudes which, in this case, appeared to be linked to their divergent socio-economic, geographic and classed realities.

The views of Cavaliers' upper middle class coaches were also rooted in their wider experiences with, and preconceptions of, urban based youth from larger cities, such as,

⁶⁰⁸ Fieldwork Journal April 1, 2011

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. July, 19, 2009

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. December 14, 2010

London and Birmingham (see *Chapter 5*). Mostly during nostalgic and embroidered clubhouse-recollections of their ‘nights out’ as young men, Richard and Lionel frequently described the deviant young black men which they encountered from these larger cities as ‘Gangster Wanna-Be’s’- or ‘G-Units.’ These were groups of black men who were seen to be beyond help, inherently troublesome and often involved in criminal activity. This reference was also used to describe a number of players who had been excluded from the Cavaliers club.

Hill-Collins (2000) and Crozier (2005) have both highlighted similar processes of objectification of deviant black youth by middle class educators.⁶¹¹ They argue that this invariably leads to two outcomes: It ‘absolves those in power ...from any responsibility for [the black youth’s] underachievement’: It ‘justifies their exclusion’.⁶¹² This last point returns us to the exclusion-based methods embraced by this group of black men within the club, which were unequivocally confirmed by Richard: “When I first came [to Cavaliers]...I had never seen anything like it! We had players playing on tag [with an electronic tag]! *I had to run them out!*”

Since 2004 numerous players who could be described as socially deviant, have been excluded from the Cavaliers club. Many of the excluded local players have relocated to rival clubs. Ironically, one of these clubs – Thurnby Nirvana - is now peopled almost entirely of ex(cluded)-Cavaliers players – many for issues of discipline – and has since leapfrogged the Cavaliers club to become the highest tiered BAME football club in the city. Charged with running the flagship first-team and unfamiliar with local talent, Cavaliers’ new managers/coaches were often unable to replace local deviant players with what they perceived to be local and ‘respectable’ black players. Subsequently, in many instances the senior men’s squad has been supplemented with better disciplined players from outside of the city. Additionally, many of Cavaliers’ imported players were dual heritage or white (see Table 6.1 and Graph 6.1).

⁶¹¹ Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought (2nd ed.)* (London, 2000); Gill Crozier, “‘There’s a War Against our Children’: Black Educational Underachievement Revisited’ *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (26) 5 (2005) pp.585–598 also see Tony Sewell, *Black Masculinities and Schooling: How Black Boys Survive Modern Schooling* (Staffordshire, 1997)

⁶¹² Crozier, “‘There’s a War Against our Children’: Black Educational Underachievement Revisited’ p593

The removal of socially deviant players has undoubtedly contributed to the reduction of the amount paid by Cavaliers in fines. Some within the club, however, argue that this manoeuvre has weakened drastically, the social and 'racial' connections between the current first-team and the club's local black membership.

Is Cavaliers Still A 'Black' Club?

What impacts have these processes of exclusion had on the social, cultural and 'racial' connections between the first-team and the local men attached to the club? As the club developed, alongside its ties to space and ethnicity, Cavaliers' identity also included a strong family dynamic. Or, in other words, Cavaliers was not just a black club from Leicester, but it was also – and quite literally - a family club; or a club *of* families:

A number of those guys in the early years have produced players for the club. Terry Frewin had two sons play, and my two lads were all in the same team together a couple of years ago... The Ashbys, the Reeces. The club is steeped in history; a very proud history. (Bryan)

Since their debut season in adult football in 1972, Cavaliers' football teams - and the wider organisation - have been made up of numerous sets of brothers, brothers and sisters, fathers and sons/daughters and husbands and wives. For example, Selston and Ezekiel White and Chris and Matthew Rose were brothers who played for Cavaliers during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Likewise, brothers and sister, Adrian, Michael and Sandra Prescott played for Cavaliers' men's and women's teams during the same period. Cavaliers' players, Ben and Josh James, Frank Frewin, Dave Leaburn and Grace Clarke were the sons and daughter of Cavaliers team's managers and coaches, Bryan James, Terry Frewin, Winston Leaburn and Louis Clarke respectively. As children, many of these players grew up watching and supporting the Cavaliers club.

Williams' has highlighted that for many of Cavaliers' black spectators watching games was an 'active and social pastime'.⁶¹³ He likened this to other forms of black entertainment where the relationship between the black performer and the black crowd

⁶¹³ Williams, "Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England' p172

has been argued to be something which is symbiotic, involved and ‘dialogic’.⁶¹⁴ The observation that Cavaliers’ spectators often contained a large number of family members enables us to point out that the connections between Cavaliers’ players and spectators was often more intimate than something which was facilitated solely through notions of racial empathy and solidarity. In this case-study, this relationship was also facilitated by kinship and local community ties. Even if they were not directly related, the tight spatial and social dynamics of the Meadebrooks area meant that Cavaliers’ supporters had close relationships with the club’s players. Many of the supporters, for example, had either looked after or had been looked after by Cavaliers’ players; gone to school with Cavaliers’ players; worked with or lived next to Cavaliers’ players (or the players’ parents and relatives).

With little support from the first-generation of post-World War Two African-Caribbean settlers, it was often their peers and the younger members of the community who travelled to Central Park or Parkview Lane and actively shared in what Burdsey has described as ‘the joys and sorrows’ and ‘the special exchanges... intrinsic to’ a football match.⁶¹⁵

[W]e had very good community support from the next generation that loved football (Bryan)

All my brothers play football and I used to go with them on the park. My mum used to make sure they took me, anyway, so I just joined in... I used to go with Cavaliers... and play with them on the park (female player for Cavaliers women’s team)⁶¹⁶

[W]e heard about this team, Meadebrook Cavaliers... So we used to go up and watch a game every now and then. And then my brother ...got signed to play for Meadebrook Cavaliers... [After that] Cavaliers were then like my dream... In the meantime my other brother - the older one (Junior) - he started playing for Meadebrook Cavaliers. And then my chance came when I was 18... (Derek)

⁶¹⁴ Gilroy *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* p214 Also see Williams, ‘“Cavaliers is a Black Club’: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’

⁶¹⁵ Daniel Burdsey, ‘No Ball Games Allowed? A Socio-Historical Examination of the Development and Social Significance of British Asian Football Clubs’ *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (32) 3 (2006) pp.477-496 p479

⁶¹⁶ John Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* (Leicester, 1993) p114

[M]y dad was playing at Cavaliers and my mum was still part of the committee. So obviously on a Saturday I'd ... watch my dad play. One thing I remember as a kid, was always wanting to play for Cavaliers' first-team... thinking wow I can't wait to play for these (Carl)

The testimonies above clearly illustrate some of the processes of socialisation which help construct new generations of football supporters and players. The watching and involvement within a particular club – or simply growing up within a family which is connected to a particular club – often facilitates an allegiance to that club for impressionable young people. This is an obvious but highly relevant point here. It is evident that this process (initially at least) also facilitated ambitions among black youth to want to play for the Cavaliers club. This was manifested in strong expressions of pride if this ambition was achieved. It also mythologised into the belief among sections of the club's membership that it is only players who are local or who have family connections to the club who can fully appreciate what playing for Cavaliers means – socially and culturally.

Against this backcloth, the reduced number of local players playing for Cavaliers has prompted associated concerns to surface – particularly among the club's elders. Founder member, George, for example, argues that the Cavaliers club is simply not as important to non-local players as it is to locally based players: "The pride in the club ...is definitely not here today." Others, such as Derek, argue that a local team which does not possess any obvious social or kinship connection to the local community defeats the very purpose of having a local black football club:

[A]ll of our home-grown players that have come through the junior sides have all kind of like, exodus... With only four players [from Leicester] and two of them Englishmen! [white] ...That doesn't sit well with me: [...] It's has killed *my* club! ...I don't want to ...support a club and I don't really know any of the players... That's just wrong!

I have loosely sketched out a couple of the emergent social and cultural tensions which were in part, brought about by the reduction in the number of local players present within the Cavaliers first-team. So far I have purposefully avoided discussing how this

development has been argued to have impacted on Cavaliers' association with blackness – or the 'racial' identity of the Cavaliers club. I will finish by saying something about this crucial matter.

Today, men within the club – black and white, old and young - point out that Cavaliers the increasing number of non-black players at Cavaliers is calling into question - albeit in a rather essentialist manner - the club's continuing status as a 'black' football club:

I don't actually think [Cavaliers] is a predominantly black club... because you have got players coming ...from black communities from white communities... It's not just a predominantly black club... [not] any more (Sean, 24, white, current Cavaliers player)

No... we've got a good mixture. It's not like it's majority black, with only one or two white [players] kind of thing. (Marcus)

More broadly, the increase in the number of non-African-Caribbean – and arguably even non-directly African-Caribbean heritage – players - is possibly altering how the club is perceived in 'race' terms within the wider and contemporary local football imagination. One Cavaliers' player, 18-year-old Sikh, Riaz, for example, explained that he was quite unaware of Cavaliers' association with the Leicester black community - even after he watched his first first-team game in 2008. This last point is pertinent as it is doubtful that during previous decades *anyone* who had seen Cavaliers' first-team play would be in any doubt as to the club's explicit connection with blackness.

Similarly to other current first-team players, Sean and Marcus, Riaz also suggests that because of the increasingly multi-racial composition of the club's flagship first-team, Cavaliers' identity as a black club - or its explicit connection with the black community - is no longer obvious. In this context, Riaz surmises that for him, today, Meadebrook Cavaliers is little different to any other local club within the city. This apparent 'black-disconnection' is something which other club members allege is also evident within the current first-team's increasingly anglicised style of football play: especially when contrasted with the ways in which previous Cavaliers teams played the game.

Don't get me wrong, Cavaliers still have very quick players... Every team at Cavaliers... the youth team down to the first-team, have at least two or three quick players - always! But the style of play that I was used to watching at

Cavaliers as a kid, is not there ...A kid nowadays at ten-years-old coming to watch Cavaliers play now, would think they're just watching an ordinary game of football. (Carl, 24, third-generation Black British: Caribbean, current Cavaliers player)

There is still a *slight* difference in style between Meadebrook Cavaliers and the white clubs. We saw it against Kirby Muxloe the young lad there, René, who was on the other wing; ...fantastic ability. But as I said some of it is a generational thing... (Bryan)

For many of the now ageing local black men who have dedicated much of their adult lives to the formation and survival of Meadebrook Cavaliers, the club represents one of the few physical markers within the city which symbolises their experiences as black footballers and as black men in Leicester. For this cohort of black men in particular, the prospect of the club which they founded nearly 40 years ago being perceived by current and subsequent generations as a club which no longer represents or symbolises 'their' stories and is no longer recognisable as black in an obvious way, is a particularly distressing development: "What does upset me now, is that to some of the younger members... Meadebrook Cavaliers is *just* another club. There is no affinity [with us]! There is nothing!" (Hugh). To other ageing members within the club this development – although distressing - is something which is inevitable: "a sign of the times" of life in late-modern Leicester (George).

Concluding Comments

I began this chapter by examining some of the economic-based motives which underpinned the Cavaliers organisation's decision to become a charitable organisation. Attention was paid to describing some of the ways in which this new status has redefined the club's original mission and how it operated. I also highlighted how, as a charity organisation, not only was Cavaliers legally required to redirect its resources to its charitable objectives, but for some members, men's senior football now represented an expensive and non-essential burden. This part of the discussion ended by highlighting how these new financial pressures had even prompted the management committee to debate the possible discontinuation of senior men's football provision at Cavaliers – the original purpose of the club.

Against a back drop of increasing pressure to make the men's senior section more cost effective, the second section centred on Cavaliers' renewed focus on managing deviant youth as a way to reduce the costs of this arm of the organisation. I highlighted how, for some Cavaliers coaches, this blue print translated unproblematically into a process of excluding local black talent. These players were often replaced with non-local and often non-black players. In addition to trying to ease the club's new financial pressures, the chapter connected the desire to better manage and exclude deviant youth to an increasing influence of professional sporting discourse. It was also underpinned by wider class facilitated and intra-racial tensions present within Cavaliers' increasingly heterogeneous African-Caribbean heritage community.

The chapter concluded by describing some of the resultant tensions prompted by the changing 'racial' and cultural identity of the Cavaliers first-team. Many of the concerns expressed here coalesced around a sense of a diminishing cultural, kinship and racial connection between Cavaliers' ageing membership (often referred to as 'the club') and the current first-team. It would be an error, however, to suggest that the increasingly multicultural identity of the club's first-team has been the sole result of Cavaliers' decision to import large numbers of non-local and non-directly-black players. The changing demographics of all of Cavaliers' teams reflect wider processes of modernisation, social and geographic mobility, and cultural fusions in the city (see *Chapter 7*). They also reflect the arrival of new immigrant groups to neighbourhoods in which the club is couched.

These points are particularly visible within Cavaliers' youth and mini-soccer division. Unlike the seniors, teams in this corner of the club are still managed by local men from the Cavaliers milieu and draw their players, typically, from the immediate locality. Like the present first-team, however, these junior teams *also* find their squads consisting of increasing numbers of players whose ethnic identities are drawn from the myriad multicultural communities who now reside within urban Leicester. This situation invites questions around whether or not it even remains possible for the Cavaliers club to produce teams made up of players who are both local and predominantly black.

It would be equally wrong, however, to ignore the fact that Cavaliers' displacement of local and black players for non-local and non-black players has contributed to a

widening kinship and ‘racial’ gulf between the current first-team and many of the club’s ageing African-Caribbean membership. The processes of ‘respectabilisation’ and even moral cleansing described throughout have undoubtedly contributed to a change in the culture and identity of what was previously an unmistakably ‘black’ sports club in Leicester.

Lastly, this chapter has highlighted how areas of this black club, originally a key platform of sporting counter hegemony in Leicester, today, embodies similar kinds of sporting expectations, values and norms found in mainstream football. This development has been the result of wider cultural, employment and social fusions between local blackness and mainstream Leicester. Alongside this, however, the chapter has demonstrated that this situation has also been brought about by a greater black incorporation within mainstream and elite-semi-professional football cultures. This was perhaps unsurprising in this example, given that a number of key drivers within this arm of the club were a part of the first wave of black-British sportsmen to spend the majority of their own playing careers as semi-professional footballers and/or as coaches within the professional English league environment.

Within this chapter I have offered some evidence to suggest that as elite level black players (re)engage with local black clubs as coaches, their more mainstream and professionalised philosophies, values and norms can have a significant impact upon the *original* and often counter hegemonic principles of the ‘black’ spaces in which they now operate. In this case, we have seen evidence to suggest that this exchange has reconfigured sections of the Cavaliers club from a space which once promoted alternative sporting and social ideologies, to one which increasingly replicated some of the same mainstream or ‘white’ club cultures which the organisation was originally created, in part, to counter.

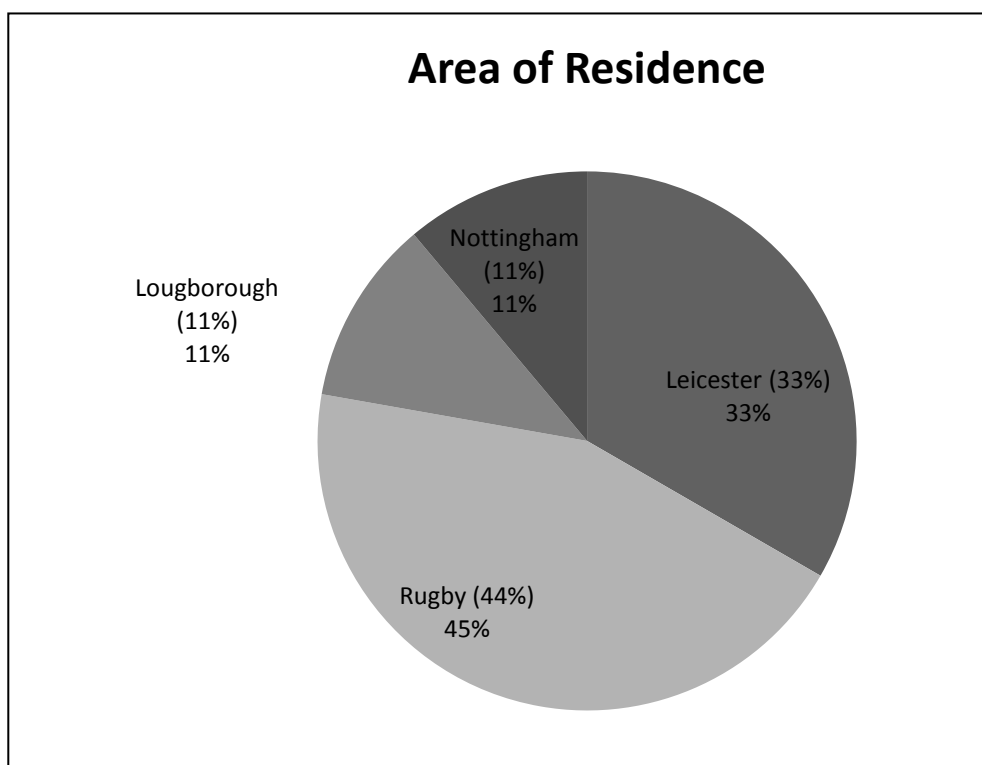
This last point leaves us with a number of important questions concerning the extent to which, and for how long, ‘black’ sports clubs such as, Meadebrook Cavaliers, might remain apart from some of the core values of dominant (sporting) culture? This is perhaps especially pertinent in light of a continuing social and cultural integration of blackness into mainstream grass-roots sport and blackness into mainstream Leicester networks more widely. In short, with a growing social diffusion and more sporting,

cultural and social exchanges for black people within systems that sporting spaces such as Cavaliers were traditionally opposed, is it feasible for sporting sites of BAME resistance to racism and exclusion to remain so in the medium to long term?

Table 6.1: Ethnicity breakdown of Meadebrook Cavaliers' first-team squad for the 2010/2011 season

| Players' ethnic origins | Number of players/ % of squad |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| African-Caribbean: British | 5 (28%) |
| African: British | 2 (11%) |
| Dual Heritage: African-Caribbean - White | 4 (22%) |
| White: British | 5 (28%) |
| Asian: Indian: British | 2 (11%) |
| Total | 18 |

Graph 6.1 Area of residence breakdown of Meadebrook Cavaliers' first-team squad for the 2010/2011 season



Chapter 7

Questions of ‘resistance’ and shifting notions of blackness in local football in Leicester

Introduction

I sat in my car waiting for Meadebrook Cavaliers’ management committee members to arrive for a club meeting. The majority of the committee consisted of second-generation African-Caribbean sports enthusiasts who have been attached to the club since its inception 40 years ago. As they arrived, it became apparent that for black men of this generation, much of our prior understanding of sport as a form of resistance may be somewhat out-dated. Each member parked their expensive cars around me and took their places at the table in the centre of the clubhouse in their smart suits – while making their excuses for being late (mostly because, as people of seniority in the respective careers, they were frequently the last to leave the office). It was soon clear that I was not observing a group of people who were still socially, economically and geographically confined to Leicester’s worst areas and worst jobs. These middle-aged black men were middle-class, successful and well-off people. Their social integration into the broader Leicester community was perhaps best typified by both their suburban homes and dual heritage (grand) children (some of whom were present at the meeting). These second-generation African-Caribbeans appeared to be men who no longer needed sport to circumvent a ghettoised social existence or a ‘masculine-less’ masculinity.⁶¹⁷ This raises the question: in the context of social resistance, what, if anything, does this sporting space continue to offer them today? In short, what is Meadebrook Cavaliers resisting now?⁶¹⁸

This chapter offers a snapshot of the recent development of the Meadebrook Cavaliers Football Club. It discusses its dynamic role as a site of sporting resistance in the lives of a number of second-generation African-Caribbean club members, during three different periods of time: the early 1970s; the 1980s; and from the early 1990s to 2010. The overall aim is to contribute to the development of knowledge about the relationship between sport and its continued use and value for this generation of black men. This

⁶¹⁷ see Ambalavaner Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger* (London, 1982); Jewelle Taylor Gibbs and James R. Merighi, ‘Young Black Males: Marginality, Masculinity and Criminality’ in Tim Newburn, and Elizabeth Anne Stanko, eds., *Just Boys Doing Business?: Men Masculinity and Crime* (London, 1995)

⁶¹⁸ Fieldwork Journal September 12, 2009

chapter does this by empirically demonstrating the diverse and arbitrary meaning(s) and uses ascribed to one site of resistance in sport. It provides current and historical data which offer a deeper appreciation of how changes in notions of “blackness” in Leicester at both the macro and micro levels, continue to impact on what local sport *means* for members of this particular generation.

Context

Ethnic identities in modernity

Modernity, or in Hall’s words, ‘the problem of modernity’, has induced writers in the field of British African-Caribbean (BAC) ethnic identity, in particular, to produce a wealth of literature and ‘critical’ theory.⁶¹⁹ This has upset previous notions of a homogenous and ahistorical BAC identity on both the micro and macro plane.⁶²⁰ In the latter respect, Banton points to important intergenerational discontinuities.⁶²¹ He highlights differences between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ ethnic identities, with the processes of fracturing increasing with each subsequent generation.⁶²² Consequently, the increasingly complex ethnic identities of second-, third-, fourth- (and so on) generation African-Caribbean heritage individuals can only be fully understood when

⁶¹⁹ Stuart Hall, ‘Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities’ in Les Back and John Solomos, eds., *Theories of Race and Racism* (London, 2000) p146; also see Kevin Hylton ‘‘Race’, Sport and Leisure: Lessons from Critical Race Theory’ *Leisure Studies* (24) 1 (2005) pp.81-98

⁶²⁰ see Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (London, 1987); *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London, 1993); *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* (London, 2000); ‘The Dialectics of Diaspora Identification’ in Les Back and John Solomos, eds., *Theories of Race and Racism* (London, 2000); Stuart Hall (1992) ‘New Ethnicities’ in Ali Rattansi, and James Donald, eds., *Race, Culture and Difference* (London, 1992); David Mason, *Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain* (2nd ed.) (Oxford, 2000); Tariq Modood, ‘Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptations in Britain: the Social context’ in Michael Rutter and Marta Tienda, eds., *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms* (Cambridge, 2005); Michael Rutter and Marta Tienda, ‘The Multiple Facets of Ethnicity’ in Rutter and Tienda, eds., *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms*

⁶²¹ Michael Banton, *Ethnic and Racial Consciousness* (2nd ed.) (London, 1997) p38-39

⁶²² Ibid.

placed in the context of what Modood and Lam and Smith all describe (as I have) as the 'larger picture.'⁶²³

Although intergenerational discontinuities in ethnic identities are widely acknowledged, Gilroy's work reminds us against drawing easy conclusions about this type of ethnic identity logic.⁶²⁴ He implicitly warns us that these identities too often tend to be depicted as fixed 'things' which are then (re)made or pieced together.⁶²⁵ By contrast, Hall suggests that intergenerational identities can be viewed as the first of 'two – interconnected – identity vectors'.⁶²⁶ The first of these overarching narratives sets the parameters of a group's social/ethnic identity (forged through shared location, history and parentage).⁶²⁷ Within this a second, more discontinuous, evolving and localised narrative manifests itself; one which, as Hall points out, is far less propagated.⁶²⁸

Giddens' concept of life phases, enable us to expand on Hall's second vector.⁶²⁹ The life phase transitions to which Giddens refers – which appear to facilitate Hall's second vector – are the infinite transitions (and subsequent experiences) which take place throughout the individual's life. For example: passing from youth to adulthood; from single person to spouse; from spouse to parent; from working-class to middle-class, and so on – a process which, from here, I will refer to as the 'objective evolution of self.'⁶³⁰ It should be noted that the transitions we go through are not exclusively social. They are also geographical and physiological. With few exceptions, however, investigations into

⁶²³ Modood, 'Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptations in Britain: the Social context'; Virginia Lam, and Gordon Smith, 'African and Caribbean Adolescents in Britain: Ethnic Identity and Britishness' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (32) 7 (2009) pp.1248–1270

⁶²⁴ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London, 1993)

⁶²⁵ Also see Johnathan Rutherford 'A Place Called Home: Identity and Cultural Politics of Difference' in Johnathan Rutherford, eds., *Identity, Community, Culture and Difference* (London, 1990)

⁶²⁶ Stuart Hall, 'Culture, Identity and Diaspora' in Rutherford, eds., *Identity, Community, Culture and Difference* p225-6

⁶²⁷ Ibid. p223

⁶²⁸ Ibid. p225-226

⁶²⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, 1991)

⁶³⁰ I use the adjective 'objective' because Giddens' 'life phases' apply to all persons. This is not to suggest that all persons from all cultures experience *the same* life phases, or experience the same life phases *in the same way*; but universally *all* persons experience social transitions which, ultimately have a significant bearing their identities.

the impact of the objective evolution of self in relation to BAC social identities (sporting and other) have been neglected.⁶³¹

Second-generation Caribbean ethnic identities in the sporting context

Work on BAME social identity formation within sport over the last ten years has assiduously sought to explore either how ‘sporting experiences have generated a range of complex meanings within the context of... gender and ethnic values’;⁶³² or ‘examine the extent to which modern sports represent... key sites for the formation of identities’, offering ‘insight in to the detailed nuances of identity construction’.⁶³³ They have also tended to focus on how some minority ethnic groups use sport to either: (a) express intergenerational difference;⁶³⁴ (b) manage complex ethnic or religious identities;⁶³⁵ or (c) challenge the wider forces which shape their social realities.

⁶³¹ Hall, ‘Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities’

⁶³² Linda Borish and Gerald R. Gems, ‘Introduction: Gender and Sport in Diverse Historical contexts’ *Journal of Sport History* (27) 3 (2000) pp.377-381 p377; also see, Daniel Burdsey, ‘No Ball Games Allowed? A Socio-Historical Examination of the Development and Social Significance of British Asian Football Clubs’ *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (32) 3 (2006) pp.477-496

⁶³³ John Harris and Andrew Parker, ‘Introduction’ in John Harris and Andrew Parker, eds., *Sport and Social Identities* (London, 2009) p2

⁶³⁴ Jeremy MacClancy, ‘Sport Identity and Ethnicity’ in Jeremy MacClancy, eds., *Sport Identity and Ethnicity* (Oxford, 1996); Les Back *et al* ‘Lions, Black Skins and Reggae Gyals’: Race, Nation and Identity in Football’ (London, 1998); ‘“Lions and Black Skins”: Race, Nation and Local Patriotism in Football’ in Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald, eds., *Race Sport and British Society* (London, 2001); Daniel Burdsey, ‘“If I Ever Play Football, Dad, Can I Play for England or India?” British Asians, Sport and Diasporic National Identities’ *Sociology – Diasporic Identities* (40) 1 (2006) pp.11–28

⁶³⁵ Les Back *et al*, ‘Lions, Black Skins and Reggae Gyals’: Race, Nation and Identity in Football’; ‘“Lions and Black Skins”: Race, Nation and Local Patriotism in Football’; Ben Carrington, ‘Sport, Masculinity, and Black Cultural Resistance’ *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* (22) 3 (1998) pp.275-298; ‘Double Consciousness and the Black British Athlete’ in Kwesi Owusu, eds., *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader* (London, 2000); ‘Postmodern Blackness and the Celebrity Sports Star’ in David A. Andrews and Steven L. Jackson, eds., *Sports Stars: The Politics of Sporting Celebrity* (London, 2001); Jas Bains and Sanjiev Johal, *Corner Flags and Corner Shops* (London, 1998); Samaya Farooq and Andrew Parker, ‘Sport, Social Identity and Islam’ in Harris and Parker, eds., *Sport and Social Identities*; Daniel McNeil, ‘Lennox Lewis and Black Atlantic Politics: The Hard Sell’ *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* (33) 1 (2009) pp.25-38

Although all three themes have largely resisted Gilroy's warnings and Hall's implicit call to incorporate the impact that his second identity vector has had on sporting social identities, it is the last theme which is of particular interest to this chapter. A current lack of contemporary and empirical sporting enquiry specifically focused on second-generation African-Caribbeans in Britain, has left implicit the perception that members of this generation continue to use sport as a means of culturally circumventing a routinely ghettoised social existence.

Despite a widely expressed view that (sporting) minority ethnic identities are always 'becoming', few researchers have thus far sought to incorporate how structural changes in the construction of twenty-first century 'blackness', and the objective evolution of self, have impacted on what sporting social identities tell us about the wider condition of such communities today.⁶³⁶

Football clubs as sites of resistance and the experience of second-generation African-Caribbeans

In spite of Williams' call for further research in 1994, the complex relationship between local grass-roots sports clubs and second-generation African-Caribbeans remains an insufficiently investigated area.⁶³⁷ During the 1990s there was, however, a small wave of academic interest in the role of grass-roots sport in the local and community context. Subsequently, at least three works of *direct* relevance emerged during this decade. Williams' own oral history of Meadebrook Cavaliers established that, like their professional counterparts, the meaning(s) many grass-roots African-Caribbean sportsmen ascribed to playing football often reflects their wider social frustrations.⁶³⁸ In later work Williams explicitly (re)positioned Meadebrook Cavaliers as emblematic of the local African-Caribbean community more widely. His work highlights a similarity

⁶³⁶ Boris and Gems, 'Introduction: Gender and Sport in Diverse Historical Contexts'; Carrington, 'Postmodern Blackness and the Celebrity Sports Star'; Joseph A Maguire et al, *Sport Worlds: A Sociological Perspective* (Leeds, 2002); Burdsey, 'No Ball Games Allowed? A Socio-Historical Examination of the Development and Social Significance of British Asian Football Clubs'; Farooq and Parker, 'Sport, Social Identities and Islam'

⁶³⁷ John Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England' in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game Without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (Aldershot, 1994)

⁶³⁸ John Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* (Leicester, 1993)

between Cavaliers' games as a sporting spectacle and Bakhtin's 'carnival'.⁶³⁹ Lastly, Carrington's ethnographic examination of the Caribbean Cricket Club in Leeds highlighted the role of local sports clubs in constructing macro and micro African-Caribbean social identities. In the context of the former, he argues that the local cricket club stood as a marker of the 'black community' in Leeds. Its 'clean' appearance and impressive facilities alone stood as a challenge to some of the social (mis)conceptions held about Britain's African-Caribbean communities. The work of Williams and Carrington thus illuminates how the meanings second-generation BAME sportsmen ascribe to their (grass-roots) sporting social identities often correlate with the structural arrangements and frustrations within their wider social environment.⁶⁴⁰

Notwithstanding this contribution and remaining mindful that (ethnic) identities in modernity are fluid and shaped by the constantly changing wider local and national political climate,⁶⁴¹ the lack of follow up work on British African-Caribbeans leaves us with an apparently obvious, but nonetheless significant, question on which this chapter hinges: to what extent have the meaning(s) that second-generation black sportsmen ascribe to their sporting sites of resistance changed in the context of wider changes at the political (local and national), social and individual level?

Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter examines local football in the lives of various second-generation African-Caribbean club members - the majority of whom have been attached to Cavaliers for most of its 40 year history - during three different periods in their lives. In the first section I examine how, as black schoolboys in the early 1970s, their sporting resistance(s) reflected the challenges they faced in their attempts to access local organised football. The second section charts their widening resort to strategies of resistance as young men in their early 20s, during the 1980s. Particular attention is paid here to the different meanings these members then ascribed to the club.

⁶³⁹ see John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (3rd ed.) (Harlow, 2001)

⁶⁴⁰ In the British Asian context, see Sallie Westwood, 'Racism, Black Masculinity and the Politics of Space' in Jeff Hearn and David Morgan, eds., *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory* (London, 1990); Bains and Johal, *Corner Flags and Corner Shops*; Burdsey, 'No Ball Games Allowed? A Socio-Historical Examination of the Development and Social Significance of British Asian Football Clubs'

⁶⁴¹ Modood, 'Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptations in Britain: The Social Context'; Lam and Smith, 'African and Caribbean Adolescents in Britain: Ethnic Identity and Britishness'

In the final section, I examine the issue of sport and resistance in the lives of these men today. The uses and meanings they ascribe to the club during this period are framed within Leicester's contemporary ethnic, employment, social and physical landscapes.

Accessing organised football c.1970-75

Outside of the problems experienced in school, many of the early frustrations expressed by these men coalesced around the obstacles which impeded their initial attempts to access *organised* football in Leicester. A combination of racially stereotyped notions of 'blackness' held by white coaches in particular, and an often (un)conscious determination to keep white working-class spaces exclusively white, resulted in many of Leicester's African-Caribbeans being blocked from entering the cohort of white football clubs in the city and the wider county of Leicestershire. For example:

Basically...no one wanted to play with us...They didn't think...we were good enough...We were very proud people. We knew what we wanted...and basically we went and said, "Ok then, f[uck] you!" (Hugh)

The local rejection of black players, however, was not always as explicit as that experienced by Hugh (and others). Instead, black players were often subjected to more nuanced and less overt forms of racism. For many black players it was the terms under which their existence within such spaces was granted that was equally – if not more – disempowering, as not being granted entry at all.⁶⁴² Contrary to the Eurocentric football model of the qualities needed to be a 'good' footballer held by most white British coaches at that time – grit, hard work and endeavour over flair, skill and ingenuity – many of Meadebrooks' young African-Caribbean players celebrated and embraced their

⁶⁴² Colin King, 'Play The White Man' www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/pdf/king.pdf (2000); 'Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game Inside Football' *Leisure Studies* (23) 1 (2004) pp.19-30

flamboyance as something that was wholly emblematic of what it was to be an (African) *Caribbean* footballer.⁶⁴³ As ex-Cavaliers player, 'Bucky' explains:

[P]eople from the Caribbean bring special qualities – pace, skill, and they like...to do a few flicks and all that. You can do the flicks and you may be going 10 yards back your way.⁶⁴⁴

To 'fit in' with white teams many of the early African-Caribbean players had to sacrifice how they enjoyed and 'naturally' played the game in favour of the Eurocentric football philosophy. Put another way, to play for a white club often meant players 'compromising their blackness in order to play the game'.⁶⁴⁵ Further, to remain in a white club many black players would have to: a) accept racialised humour (from internal and external sources); b) work twice as hard as their white team-mates to get a game;⁶⁴⁶ and c) endure processes of 'stacking' which dictated which field and leadership positions they were permitted to access.⁶⁴⁷ In part as a response to either being denied access to Leicester's local white clubs or only being granted conditional entry,⁶⁴⁸ the Cavaliers founding members chose to create their own football club, Meadebrook Cavaliers. As George elucidates:

We went to a lot of other clubs, and you never got treated right. [Now we] can come and have a football team and...just come and feel free really...not walk around feeling that people can judge you and that...So at the time we think to ourselves if we did get this club, it's not going to be like that! We gon' make sure that the black community can come and play football without being treated like that...so they can just come and play football...without fear...being called names, or whatever they do at these other clubs.

His point about playing in an environment which felt 'comfortable' is critical to identifying the specific processes these young men were trying to circumvent in

⁶⁴³ see John Williams and Rogan Taylor, 'Boys Keep Swinging: Masculinity and Football Culture' in Tim Newburn and Elizabeth Anne Stanko, eds., *Just Boys Doing Business: Men, Masculinity and Crime* (London, 1995)

⁶⁴⁴ Williams, "'Cavaliers is a Black Club': Race, Identity and Local Football in England' p172-173

⁶⁴⁵ King, 'Play The White Man' p25-26

⁶⁴⁶ Robyn L. Jones, 'The Black Experience within English Semiprofessional Soccer' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (26) 1 (2002) pp.47-65

⁶⁴⁷ Joseph A Maguire, 'Race and Position Assignment in English Soccer: A Preliminary Analysis of Ethnicity and Sport in Britain' *Sociology of Sport Journal* (5) 3 (1988) pp.257-269

⁶⁴⁸ King, 'Play The White Man'

forming Meadebrook Cavaliers (ones which were continually echoed). The importance of having a space which was free from the structuring gaze of whiteness, where one could be a person *who is black* without having to be *a black person* appeared to be equally significant as the opportunity to play in organised competition.⁶⁴⁹ In this context, Cavaliers constituted a complex space which, at one and the same time, both resisted the structuring ‘panopticon’ of whiteness and acted as a vehicle which enabled the young African-Caribbeans to compete in local organised football.⁶⁵⁰ It is important however, as we have pointed out, not to overstate the racial dynamic behind the club’s inception. It appears that for many of Cavaliers’ founding members, the formation of the club was not a conscious or *racially* motivated political reaction, as Hugh explains:

[Forming the club] was about pride and a sense of belonging I think. That is the key. We didn’t know that we were making a political statement...we just wanted to play football, and we wanted to do it in an environment where we felt needed, wanted, and we felt comfortable. We didn’t want to constantly be called “black bastards” or “nigger”...and [run out]...for a team that...we didn’t have no affinity with. That’s it! That’s basically it.

In the context of resistance, Cavaliers appeared to be founded as a response to being denied opportunities to play organised football in the way *they wanted*, and in an environment that they felt wanted in (albeit because of discursive barriers erected because of the colour of their skin).

Resisting ‘political blackness’ c.1980-1992

Rex has noted that politically, blackness during the 1960s was defined by a marginalised existence facilitated by structural barriers in education, housing and employment.⁶⁵¹ From the participant testimonies that follow, it appears that the structural arrangements and subsequent ‘ghettoisation’ that Rex refers to were still at

⁶⁴⁹ Carrington, ‘Sport, Masculinity, and Black Cultural Resistance’

⁶⁵⁰ see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 1977)

⁶⁵¹ John Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass* (Aldershot, 1988); also see Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1991); Winston James and Clive Harris, ‘Introduction’ in Winston James and Clive Harris, eds., *Inside Babylon* (London, 1993); Lorna Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority* (Aldershot, 2000)

work during the 1980s. It was these arrangements, particularly in the employment sphere, which the formation of Cavaliers helped participants to resist ‘culturally’.⁶⁵²

As Everton explains, a lack of control over their employment ‘choices’ and being institutionally ‘pushed’ into jobs that they did not want was a recurring theme: “[A]t school... my generation was pushed into manual apprenticeships.”⁶⁵³ Once inside Leicester’s predominantly white workforce, many of the interviewees soon found themselves disillusioned and perilously close to social disenchantment. This situation was brought about, in part, through a combination of employment ghettoisation and exposure to an unconditional racial (mis)treatment (described by Louis, below, as ‘deep-grained racism’). It was these factors in particular which forced Louis, and others like him, to re-evaluate his choice to try to make a living through ‘conventional’ employment:

I worked for a freezer food shop... [where] I experienced racism. Probably my first experience of deep grained racism...I went to Manchester [for an inter-company event and]...one of the managing directors came up...to my manager and said, “What are you employing them [black people] for?” And Simon [my manager] had a quick word with him, and came and told me, “He don’t like black people.” So he says, “You’ll struggle if you want a career in this”. I wanted a career in sales...but you know, I was kept in the back of the shop filling up freezers...At first I was into my job, but when that experience happened, the job just became a means to an end...I came very close to living life on the “dark side”.

Against this type of experience, playing football and playing football for Meadebrook Cavaliers provided these young men with a purpose and a point to persevering with their dead-end jobs in the legitimate employment sphere. As Richard points out:

I think the reason I went from job to job is because I was never comfortable...I don’t think I was out of a job for more than two weeks tops. I always worked, just any job, *as long as I was playing football*...it was what people around [here]...knew me for. Yeah I was well-known...my football was a source of pride and I love it...Saturday morning I wake up and I’m buzzing...*that was the main thing in my life*, the job was secondary. I wasn’t getting anywhere with my career, [but] it was just paying my way.

⁶⁵² Stephen Duncombe, ‘(From) Cultural Resistance to Community Development’ *Community Development Journal* (42) 4 (2007) pp.490-500

⁶⁵³ Also see Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass*; Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*; James and Harris, ‘Introduction’

For Richard, football provided an alternative and positive identity, and neighbourhood status. It also helped him endure the numerous dead-end jobs which he flitted between during his youth. For almost all the respondents – as for many young men from disadvantaged backgrounds - their work identities were relatively unimportant. Often its main purpose was to finance sporting activities. Playing football for Meadebrook Cavaliers specifically facilitated and magnified the social significance of their sporting identities, both by providing the stage, script and audience for these men to ‘play out’ satisfying constructions of self by attaching their individualised sporting identities to a group collective or community.

Within the internal ‘community’ of the club, players became socially (re)integrated through a combination of on and off-pitch camaraderie and informal ties and responsibilities. These included roles such as, being the club captain or even just being the player who was ‘good’ for the dressing room spirit. These ties intersected with formal responsibilities such as, committee membership, coach, treasurer and other non-playing roles that the players also became immersed in. Subsequently, Meadebrook Cavaliers became a significant physical and social space in the lives of the participants. The club became a space which provided respite from the racialised (mis)treatment experienced in the work sphere and elsewhere. In addition, socially, Cavaliers (re)integrated its members into a larger collective. At its most rudimentary level, the club became a cultural space where the players could socially replenish and recharge at the end of a long day in a job they often did not want to be in, alongside white colleagues who did not want them there. For instance:

Playing for Meadebrooks, when you’re at work, it’s a funny situation... now you’re out in the big world against the adults and men and obviously they have different ways and different thinkings...and then the Meadebrooks...you’re with your mates again. You’re playing football and having a laugh. (George)

I had the safety net and the comfort of coming back here [to Meadebrook Cavaliers] ...Being a part of Meadebrook Cavaliers and being with my friends

[helped me in]...keeping my sanity...Without that? Phfff! I would be ‘coconut’ bound! No doubt.⁶⁵⁴ (Hugh)

Hugh’s testimony, however, points to another pivotal role for the Cavaliers club. During this period Cavaliers also become a key site where the players’ black *political* identities and perceptions of self were maintained. For the majority of Cavaliers’ African-Caribbean players, entering Leicester’s employment market was their first time within a white dominated space. At work they would often be the only African-Caribbean employee. For some, this accentuated the significance of ‘maintaining their blackness.’ This became a central issue for Hugh who, when he attended the city’s university between 1982 and 1985, perceived his time spent within the white academic context as threatening his capacity to keep sight of, and maintain, his ‘black self’ (believing he would become ‘a coconut’). For Hugh and the other players who shared this view, Meadebrook Cavaliers had become a key site for black cultural and symbolical (re)engagement.

For these older Cavaliers players, such as Hugh, George and Vinroy, the club acted as a space where their blackness could be maintained. For the slightly younger players, such as Louis and Adrian, the club was where their black *political* identities were (re)constructed. Unlike some of the older players, many of the younger second-generation players had been just too young to experience first-hand the often physical and violent clashes between local white groups and the black newcomers which often characterised the early years of settlement in Leicester. Because of their omission from these conflicts which had become pivotal – and often exaggerated in their retelling – moments within the Leicester black cultural imagination, some of Cavaliers’ second wave of second-generation players were unaware of the full, unedited – and somewhat mythologized – history of their own generation. In this context, the Cavaliers’ club (house) inadvertently became a hub of African-Caribbean history, folklore and education. Adrian explains that for the younger players, football training soon became as much to do with learning about their heritage as it was learning about the game:

⁶⁵⁴ The term ‘coconut’ is a commonly used reference by some British African-Caribbeans to describe a black person who is perceived to be ‘culturally’ ‘white’ on the inside and ‘racially’ ‘black’ on the outside.

From you just playing football you...started to hear some of the history about what some of those guys had to do just to make sure you could just walk in town! Because even when we were growing up, the only place most of us ever knew was just the Meadebrooks area. Most of us didn't venture into town... So when I started listening to some of the stories about how, in particular, the Browns had to, as a family, fight their way just so that black people could walk into town...that was very powerful.

The stories told by these *older* players largely fell in to two categories: what they had done in their youth; and what was currently happening to them (particularly in the work sphere). For *younger* early black players such as Adrian, the stories from the first category added another discursive piece to what we might call the younger players' black 'sense-of-self jigsaw'. A combination of the stories from the second category and their *own* (limited) experience(s) of Leicester (outside of the Meadebrooks area), enabled them to construct – vicariously – a comprehension of the (local) social world in which they were entering.⁶⁵⁵ These sometimes embroidered stories of their older team-mates' lives in the work sphere (or their inability to satisfactorily access it) provided them with a deeper political appreciation of the socio-economic frustrations the black community was experiencing. It also helped them understand why some of those same team-mates had taken to the streets in 1981, briefly torching the shops in their own neighbourhood. Eventually, Adrian's maturing and heightened political awareness forced him to reevaluate the fundamentals of what the club stood for, and what the Cavaliers football matches that he played in were 'about':

This was about racism. I think that was a key factor because I then began to look at what Cavaliers stood for... It then became, certainly as I understood it when I started playing... let's show them what this black team can do! And there began I suppose the challenge...*it wasn't then just about football.*

Adrian's conclusions identify this period as one in which Cavaliers players began to perceive the club as a means to directly challenge the many forms of racism which they

⁶⁵⁵ Avtar Brah, 'Unemployment and Racism: Asian Youth on the Dole' in Sheila Allen et al, eds., *The Experience of Unemployment* (London, 1986); Sallie Westwood, 'Red Star Over Leicester: Racism, the Politics of Identity and Black Youth in Leicester' in Pnina Werbner, and Muhammad Anwar, eds., *Black and Ethnic Leaderships: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action* (London, 1991)

were experiencing in sport (and wider social life). Here the club shifted from something which the founders largely viewed as a vehicle to access local organised football, to a platform via which one might culturally challenge the processes of racialised marginalisation that shaped their daily social realities.

What is Cavaliers resisting now? c. 2010 and beyond

*On my way to interview Everton, I found myself parked in a suburban, tree-lined road characterised by grand Tudor-style houses with leafy drives. The road, however, was not only lined with trees, but with Mercedes SUVs and BMWs on either side. Everton's house was no exception.*⁶⁵⁶

People have [not] got any signs in the window that say, "No blacks, no dogs, no Irish" [anymore]...Today it's a different ball game...We've integrated fabulously...We have dual heritage children. We have mixed marriages. There's been an understanding and fusion of cultures which has brought out this new black Caribbean community [which] is far more rounded, more flexible (Louis).

Everton's comfortable home base and Louis' claim that cultural syncretisation and notions of blackness in Leicester today, compared to 25-40 years-ago, is a completely 'different ball game', *initially* appear to be very apt. This is particularly the case when one looks at Leicester's contemporary (public) employment and housing sectors. As of March 2010, Leicester City Council had workforce representation of the 'black' community which stood at 3.8 per cent.⁶⁵⁷ When compared to the proportion of black people living in the city (4.3 per cent of the overall population), this is marginally short of a representative workforce. Further, throughout the local council's management structure, BAME groups are represented at every level. Geographically, at the time of the last census (in 2001), nine of the city's twenty-two wards had a concentration of residents listed as black or black British (BoBB) – approximately 1.5 to 3 times greater

⁶⁵⁶ Fieldwork Journal September 19, 2009

⁶⁵⁷ This figure included those listed as Black or Black British: Caribbean; Black or Black British: African; Black or Black British: Other Black; Mixed: white and Black Caribbean; and Mixed: white and Black African. See Leicester City Council 2010 Leicester City Council, *Area Profile for the City of Leicester: Demographic and Cultural* (2010) <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/council-and-democracy/city-statistics/demographic-and-cultural/#Eth>

than the national average, which stood at approximately 2 per cent.⁶⁵⁸ A further four of the city's wards had a concentration of BoBB communities equal to, or above, the national average. Although nine wards had a concentration of BoBB communities which was below the national average, nowhere in the city was the percentage lower than half the national figure.⁶⁵⁹ Unlike the picture 25-40 years ago, today there are few wards in the city which appear to overtly exclude black (including South Asian) people. By the same token, there is also no longer a singular significant black Caribbean space or a concentrated black presence left within the city - in the way there had been during previous decades.

This is not to suggest, however, that the Meadebrooks area is now devoid of a visible African-Caribbean presence. It continues to house a significant number of predominantly first-generation African-Caribbean and lower income black families. Indeed, many of Cavaliers' managers, coaches, helpers and non-committee members are made up of people from the latter category. Thus, it appears that for many of these black men today, their sporting identities continue to play a crucial role in providing an alternative and positive social identity among their peers and family (as it did for the participants in previous years).

For those black people who remain within the Meadebrooks area and within Leicester's working class stratum, the extent of the black community's incorporation into Leicester's mainstream may be somewhat debatable. Further, despite changes within Leicester's workforce and population demographics, within the *local* popular imagination, the Meadebrooks area remains renowned locally as a 'black space.' It hosts a number of key African-Caribbean institutions. Of pertinence here, too, is Giddens' recognition that while each transition (at both the socio-political and personal level) often brings a sense of growth or gain, it also brings with it a sense of *loss*. It is within this context of loss, that the history of resistance in this section is framed.

The apparent diffusion of the African-Caribbean community from the Meadebrooks into the wider Leicester community over the past 40 years threatens to leave Meadebrooks

⁶⁵⁸ Leicester City Council, *Ethnicity in Leicester: Key results from 2001 census* (Leicestershire County Council, 2005) p33; also see Office for National Statistics, *Ethnicity: Population Size (2010)* <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=273&Pos=4&ColRank>

⁶⁵⁹ Leicester City Council, *Ethnicity in Leicester: Key results from 2001 census* p33

with relatively few *obvious* symbolic testaments to the black Caribbean presence and its contribution to the history of the area and city. Some of the buildings in the Meadebrooks area which had become significant markers in the Leicester African-Caribbean cultural imagination, such as the Meadebrooks Community Centre and the African-Caribbean Community Centre, along with small black businesses, can resemble hollowed out venues – places neglected by the local authority (whose attention and funds might be described as now directed on more challenging or challenged communities) and increasingly socially more marginal to the latest generation of African-Caribbean heritage young persons.

Against this changing landscape, Cavaliers' physical and symbolic significance as a "site of heritage" (Everton) for some of the participants has been inflated. For Everton, Adrian and George, Cavaliers' facilities now represent one of the few remaining symbols to the existence of a (frequently romanticised) African-Caribbean community and importantly, that community's ability to 'take care of its own business.'⁶⁶⁰

[Cavaliers is] something for the African-Caribbean community. The black community...can say, "Okay, at least we're running something for ourselves"...Over the years, we've not just had football here. We had funeral wakes...we've had a fun day...that's been going 20-odd years now. So [we]...don't want to lose that...The club is definitely more important to me now (George).

Forty years ago the black experience in Meadebrooks was atypical (largely brought about by a specific geographic housing dynamic). In other British cities with significant African-Caribbean settlement, such as London and Birmingham, African-Caribbeans often lived in small pockets across large conurbations. Consequently, migrants might only infrequently meet other African-Caribbeans. African-Caribbeans in Leicester, however, might see each other daily. The relatively few streets in the Meadebrooks area were once home to almost the entire black community in Leicester. During

⁶⁶⁰ The term, 'take care of business' was used by decorated black actor, Norman Beaton. He argued that African-Caribbeans were portrayed on British television as being a haphazard group: 'considering that black people have been *taking care of business* for a very long time...what we get on British television is black people who don't take care of business, and I don't like that...they don't really reflect our views, our understanding of life, our intelligence, or where we are coming from...' cited in Jim Pines, *Black and White In Colour* (London, 1992) p116 (my italics)

conversations my respondents frequently claimed that such close proximity facilitated a highly insular and tightly-knit community. This situation can often lead to romanticised ideas about a sense of community and racialised togetherness. Whether imagined or not, this sense of black community was central to their (re)constructions of self and the Cavaliers club. Importantly, it was also central to what they imagined the club once (re)presented.

Today, however, with no one urban space monopolising a concentration of black people in quite the same way as the Meadebrooks area used to, the African-Caribbean community as the participants *remember it*, appears to no longer to exist in the city in that form.⁶⁶¹ The members also acknowledged that their own aspirations, mobility, career trajectories and commitment to their families have contributed to the apparently increasing ‘disappearance’ of predominantly black neighbourhoods in Leicester.

For many of the participants today, the previously simple task of casually meeting up with their old team-mates (whom they used to see nearly every day) is almost impossible. Subsequently, for these aging black men, the club is one of the city’s last bastions where black people of their generation can (re)construct – albeit in a relatively ephemeral manner – the intense sense of community within which they grew up. Importantly, it also provides a ‘legitimate excuse’ to see old friends. It is for these reasons that Hugh believes that 40 years after these men founded the club and 20-plus years after they finished playing football, Cavaliers is still just as important to the ex-team-mates as it once was:

I’ve got another meeting here [at the club] tomorrow night, with George and Ordell, and we get there and it’s a chance to meet up again, and Del can be here [all ex-players] and we’ll talk about things. And we’ll argue about things. And then we finish. And then we start talking about fun things...*The club is the real latch*. That’s what keeps us together! Because I wouldn’t see them [otherwise] if the club wasn’t ‘ere. All of the individuals in this room, I probably wouldn’t see all of them. Very rarely...It’s like a family...So the club is definitely a linchpin (Hugh).

⁶⁶¹ Some may also point to the arrival of later – and larger – minority ethnic and immigrant communities in the Meadebrooks area as a contributing factor to the apparent ‘diminishment’ of the African-Caribbean community (as the participants remembered it)

In his work on white working-class subcultures, John Clarke has described this sort of process as the ‘magical recovery’ of an imagined community.⁶⁶² While the strategies employed by the young white men in Clarke’s study and those used by these Cavaliers members are markedly different, the essence of his concept is applicable.⁶⁶³ During my observation of various meetings, I watched how these otherwise professional, well-spoken and often reserved black men, once inside the club, exhibit styles of cultural interaction previously locked into a different era. I could recollect such magnified displays of African-Caribbean colloquialism and exaggerated mannerisms from when I was a child among my own first-generation African-Caribbean parents (on the rare occasions I was allowed to be in the front room when ‘big people’ were socialising).

From the food available, the posturing and body language, the jokes told, the social etiquette on display - e.g. *all* the second-generation persons present referred to any first-generation African-Caribbeans as *Missa* (Mr.) or *Miss* - socially and culturally the Cavaliers space became reminiscent once again of the older black community which the interviewees had described. Thus, whether by intention or not, when the participants came together in this venue and in this context, they managed – for the briefest time – to magically (re)construct the romanticised sense of black community that they still *remembered*.

Concluding comments

This chapter highlights the fact that although the formation of Meadebrook Cavaliers did appear to be in part a reaction to the sporting opportunities explicitly and implicitly denied the participants because of their Caribbean background, unlike other clubs in the region, it was not created explicitly to challenge the overt racisms directed at them.⁶⁶⁴ Indeed, ironically, it was the very creation of the club which helped increase the

⁶⁶² John Clarke, ‘The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community’ in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance Through Rituals* (London, 1976)

⁶⁶³ It should also be noted that unlike those in Clarke’s study who were perhaps not fully aware of the extent to which ‘their’ community was ‘changing’, my participants appear to appreciate – and possibly overstate – the apparent shrinking of their/Leicester’s African-Caribbean community.

⁶⁶⁴ See Westwood, ‘Red Star Over Leicester: Racism, the Politics of Identity and Black Youth in Leicester’

players' exposure to overt racism in Leicester. This is a crucial distinction. At this early juncture the club was predominantly a reaction both to a lack of local, accessible sporting spaces and a lack of sporting spaces where young black men *felt* they could be a footballer who was in every way black, without having to be a black footballer.⁶⁶⁵ Furthermore, the sporting centrality of their 'resistance needs' as a reflection of their wider social frustrations suggests that as young boys their politicised black identities had not yet been brought fully into focus. The participants' limited awareness of their racially prescribed social realities, environment, and 'blackness' (and their consequent need to circumvent such barriers), appeared to be intimately related to their relatively limited exposure to Leicester outside of the Meadebrooks area.

In the second era, I argued that a significant new relationship was developing between the members' maturing awareness of their politicised black selves (largely brought into focus by their increased exposure to 'white' Leicester) and the changing uses/meanings they ascribed to the club as a site of resistance. Generically, as a social space, Cavaliers accentuated these men's sporting social identities. This facilitated a resilience and a sense of purpose, which enabled them to withstand their frustrations born out of their ghettoisation in the local labour market. It also enabled them to resist their racialised mistreatment within Leicester's largely intolerant work sphere. Additionally, evidence suggests a relative fracturing of the resistance meanings ascribed to the club. The participants' personal experiences and needs influenced their interpretation(s) of exactly *which* forces the club and their own involvement in local football were resisting. For some, Cavaliers during this period was a space where black identities were (re)constructed and/or maintained. For others, the club provided a platform to legitimately challenge their social and employment marginalisation. The impact of the objective evolution of self on the fracturing meanings ascribed to Cavaliers as a site of resistance, however, was perhaps most apparent in the most recent period.

The last section locates the contemporary meanings ascribed to the club within both the actual and members' individualised perceptions of the changing political parameters of twenty-first century 'blackness' in Leicester. The latter was intimately linked to their own upward social mobility. Subsequently, the resistance meanings ascribed to the club

⁶⁶⁵ Carrington, 'Sport, Masculinity, and Black Cultural Resistance'

here no longer reflect these men's inability to access organised football or even their challenges to racialised marginalisation. Rather, they reflect a cultural resistance to a late-modern and increasingly multicultural Britain. What becomes increasingly apparent here is the complex interplay between 'race', class/social mobility and the (re)negotiation of self. From my general observations of various members of the club, there exists a class divide inside Cavaliers. This was especially evident within their resistance needs expressed and displayed. For the majority of Meadebrook Cavaliers cohort of managers, coaches and helpers – mainly local working class parents – their attachment to the club seems to offer a platform to (re)construct an alternative and positive masculine identity. It was also a means to acquire local social capital. This was contrasted with the responses from the majority of the members here.

For this group of largely middle-class black men today, the use of their sporting social identities in the manner highlighted above appears to have almost completely diminished. For these respondents, it is likely that opportunities to satisfy their wider identity needs in the workplace and in family settings have meant that, with ageing, their own sporting social identities have become relatively less important. As Richard concludes, "I suppose [I see myself now as a] teacher really... Beforehand it would be a footballer [semi-professional]...But now it's completely changed." This also appears true for the role of the Cavaliers club as a site of resistance in the sporting context.

Of course, this is not to suggest that Cavaliers does not still hold residual resistance functions for these ageing, 'middle class', second-generation black men. But what the club facilitates in terms of what these men resist today, is more the disappearance of a rather romanticised, tightly-knit and highly visible black African-Caribbean community in Leicester (as *they remembered it*). This last point further highlights how the interplay of class mobility and 'race' bears upon the resistance strategies enacted. The current black working-class club members, for example, appear to use the club to circumvent the structural external forces of a ghettoised existence (as the participants had once done). By contrast, my respondents appear to use the club today, to resist internal transformations which, paradoxically, have largely been brought about by the impact of their own upward social mobility. These testimonies show that black social mobility has

not only resulted in black departures from the Meadebrooks area, but it has impacted on opportunities to socially (re)engage with that community.

This final point may go some way to explain Louis's (possibly overstated) claim that blackness in Leicester today, is a 'whole new ball game'. Such an assertion would appear to depend largely on the black individual's social, geographic and economic reality. However, we need more investigation into whether this kind of magical (re)construction and (re)engagement with the 'black community' in cities such as Leicester points to an actual diminishing of 'blackness' in the city (socially, culturally and/or symbolically), or whether this perceived disappearance of authentic 'blackness' is actually more closely related to these particular men's own social and economic mobilisation.

In the next chapter, and in tune with many of the issues raised above, I turn to the re-interpretation of late-modern Meadebrook Cavaliers as a new site for community development and for public expressions of cross-ethnic forms of community cohesion.

Chapter 8

‘Real’ solutions for ‘real’ problems?

Community development, cultural cohesion and local football

Introduction

Most of the existing work in this field focuses on the ways in which local football has enabled young men to circumvent the structural parameters which shape their wider social realities.⁶⁶⁶ Duncombe reminds us, however, that often these kinds of circumventions are ‘politically ambiguous’ and usually ‘locked in culture’.⁶⁶⁷ Or in the words of Hall and Jefferson, these spaces offer only imaginary solutions to ‘problems which at the concrete, material level remain unresolved.’⁶⁶⁸ These are in effect, ‘imaginary solutions to real world problems’.⁶⁶⁹ Against this background, it is my intention to provide a historical and sociological case study which describes and demonstrates the Cavaliers club’s role as both an informal and formal platform for community development in Leicester from 1982-2010. Put another way, this chapter aims to show how this local sporting space provided sections of Leicester’s black community with what Duncombe, Hall and Jefferson might all describe as *real* solutions to real problems.

Previously, I have outlined some of the ways in which sports policy has been employed by the state largely to pacify local populations. In this case, to offer professional qualifications to disaffected, urban based BAME youth during the 1980s and early

⁶⁶⁶ John Williams, ‘“Cavaliers is a Black Club”: Race, Identity and Local Football in England’ in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (Aldershot, 1994); Daniel Burdsey, ‘Forgotten Fields? Centralizing the Experiences of Minority Ethnic Men’s Football Clubs in England’ *Soccer & Society* (10) 6 (2009) pp.704–721; Steven Bradbury, ‘From Racial Exclusions to New Inclusions: Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Football Clubs in the East Midlands of England’ *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (46) 1 (2010) pp.1-22

⁶⁶⁷ Stephen Duncombe, ‘(From) Cultural Resistance to Community Development’ *Community Development Journal* (42) 4 (2007) pp.490-500 p497

⁶⁶⁸ cited in Duncombe, ‘(From) Cultural Resistance to Community Development’ p497

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. p498

1990s. Unlike sports *training* initiatives, which attempted to provide black youth with vocational qualifications, arbitrarily *playing* sport appeared to offer few formal solutions for the users' wider socio-economic marginalisation – beyond alleviating the boredom which typically accompanied long term unemployment. Sport offered only 'imaginary solutions' then, 'to real world problems'.⁶⁷⁰

Against this view, Westwood identified Leicester-based BAME football club, Red Star, as one of the few local football clubs to formally attempt to mobilise BAME youth, both socially and politically, in Leicester during the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁶⁷¹ As her thesis implicitly alludes, little at that time had been documented with regards to how local sports clubs formally fostered BAME community development. It is the intention of this chapter then to widen this focus, at least in a preliminary way.

It is perhaps an overly cited truism that football clubs (both grass-roots and professional) are often, to those attached to them, 'more than just a club.' This is usually because they also provide some form of sociability or key community functions. Budd for example, highlights how some local sports clubs in Middlesbrough often provide annual and specifically community-based events.⁶⁷² Within this chapter, I aim to sketch-out the ways in which the Cavaliers club has also - and formally - served a community-based and community-development function.

By way of establishing some context, I begin by revisiting the discussion on the black British experience during the 1980s in an attempt to identify some of the factors which underpinned the creation of the social, and later, the community arm of the Cavaliers club. Drawing primarily on club archives and club-member-testimonies, I then move on to describe two community development schemes launched by the Cavaliers club in 1982 and 1992. Attention is then given to the impact these developments had on the micro-politics within the club. I will argue that these initiatives further fractured the

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Sallie Westwood, 'Red Star Over Leicester: Racism, the Politics of Identity and Black Youth in Leicester' in Pnina Werbner and Muhammad Anwar, eds., *Black and Ethnic Leaderships: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action* (London, 1991) p155 (It should be noted that Red Star predominantly focused on local Asian youth)

⁶⁷² Catherine Budd, *The Growth of an Urban Sporting Culture - Middlesbrough, c. 1870-1914* (PhD Thesis, De Montfort University, 2012)

club's identity, which during this period was already becoming increasingly fragmented.

Next, I explore the increasing centrality of the community work rhetoric in representations of the Cavaliers club's public identity over the last decade, particularly within the city's local newspaper, the *Leicester Mercury*. Attention is also given to how this recent representation of Cavaliers as something which the club's management committee has also and explicitly attempted to reinforce and convey – and to the factors behind this development. Lastly, drawing on data obtained from the organisation's own 2010 Fun Day survey, the final section begins by sketching out a clearer picture of the different communities the club - now something of a formally recognised cultural space for community cohesion practices - brings together. Attention is then given to what the survey data indicates are the implicit and additional 'community' functions the club provides for local people in late-modern Leicester. By examining how contemporary individuals of African-Caribbean heritage use the club's Fun Day currently, the chapter concludes by discussing what these kinds of black community provision may tell us about the nature of 'blackness' in late-modern Britain.

Context

Race relations in the 1980s

In 1979, the number of people unemployed in Britain was marginally short of 1 million.⁶⁷³ According to Glyptis, under new Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, unemployment in Britain continued to increase, peaking at over 3.4 million in 1986 (12.3 per cent).⁶⁷⁴ Kushner suggests that under Thatcher's stewardship, social and economic marginalisation was more harshly felt by Britain's urban based BAME communities - and particularly harshly felt by school leavers from these families.⁶⁷⁵ Feelings of powerlessness and resentment among this demographic were compounded

⁶⁷³ Lesley Hannah, 'Crisis and Turnaround? 1973-1993' in Paul Johnson, eds., *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London, 1994) p342

⁶⁷⁴ Sue Glyptis, 'Local Authority Sports Provision for the Unemployed: The UK Experience' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (26) 2 (1991) pp.101-115 p102

⁶⁷⁵ Tony Kushner, 'Immigration and 'Race Relations' in Postwar British Society' in Paul Johnson, eds., *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London, 1994)

by their experiences of heavy handed policing, judicial incompetence and political neglect.⁶⁷⁶ As discussed in detail in *Chapter 5*, these arrangements were deeply implicated as some of the factors which underpinned the decision of thousands of mainly young - and predominantly black - men to violently take to the streets in 29 different cities across Britain in 1981.⁶⁷⁷

As a response to the 1976 Race Relations Act and also to the ‘race’ riots in 1981, the city of Leicester launched a series of policies and initiatives designed to re-enfranchise local disillusioned and alienated BAME youth.⁶⁷⁸ Alongside the emergence of various sport-based youth training schemes, government funds were also allocated for the establishment of new sports facilities and for support for already existing sports and leisure clubs (which predominantly served Leicester’s BAME communities). It was these processes which enabled Cavaliers to acquire its own football ground and social facilities with City Council support in 1982. Having its own ground enabled Cavaliers to become an established local club. Moreover, controlling one’s own facilities also enabled the organisation to become a much more important local space for exercising and promoting a specific kind of black sociability.

Sociability and local black football

Prior to gaining control of their own facilities in 1982, it is unlikely that the Cavaliers club ever organised social events beyond, of course, annual football functions such as, presentation evenings. As a park-based team there was no pressing demand - or available facility - to hold functions beyond this kind. Furthermore, hiring a space which was suitable to hold more elaborate social functions would have represented a significant cost to this cohort of young working class black men who, as we have seen, had little access to financial resources at that time. The Cavaliers club, however, began

⁶⁷⁶ See Christine F Collette and Keith Laybourn, ‘Ethnicity and Racial Equality’ in Collette and Laybourn, eds., *Modern Britain since 1979: A Reader* (London, 2003)

⁶⁷⁷ Glyptis, ‘Local Authority Sports Provision for the Unemployed: The UK Experience’ p102

⁶⁷⁸ Sue Glyptis et al, *Sport and the Unemployed: Final Report on the Monitoring of Sport Council Schemes in Leicester, Derwentshire and Hockley Port 1981-84* (Sports Council, 1986); Valerie Marett, *Immigrants Settling in the City: Ugandan Asians in Leicester* (Leicester, 1989); Gurhpal Singh, ‘Multiculturalism in Contemporary Britain: Reflections on the ‘Leicester Model’’ *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (5) 1 (2003) pp.40-55

to host social functions soon after moving into their new Parkview Lane ground. As I explain below, this development can be seen as being connected to new financial pressures, new opportunities (both largely brought by the move to Parkview) and a continuing black exclusion from mainstream leisure spaces within Leicester during the 1980s.

Although the Cavaliers club was financially supported by local government, its maintenance grant only covered *some* of the expense which accompanied owning their own facilities. Subsequently, ground ownership brought new financial pressures. This required new and imaginative ways of generating revenue. Alongside its function as a members club – whereby each member (in theory at least) paid an annual membership fee – Cavaliers introduced a range of social events. The importance to the management committee of the development of this arm of the club was reflected in the creation of the Social Secretary post as early as 1988.⁶⁷⁹ By this point, club functions included annual dances and an annual Fun Day event.

It is important to note that in the beginning these functions were viewed by the club's management committee mainly as a means to generate additional revenue. Initially, they were not promoted as serving an explicitly black political, black community or black cohesive function. As a space which brought together large numbers of black and socially marginalised people – just as the football team had – these functions also became bound up within the politics of race and in turn, but largely unintentionally, offered up social and political functions of this nature.

The club's capacity to successfully host social functions also arose from the fact that once Cavaliers had acquired its own private facilities, its membership expanded significantly. The Cavaliers club has not maintained reliable records of the number of its members during these first decades of formation. Considering that within this period Cavaliers introduced a third adult men's team, plus a darts and cricket team, however, we can speculate that the number of club members – and so, people likely to attend any

⁶⁷⁹ *Meadebrook Cavaliers v Radford F.C* Meadebrook Cavaliers Sports and Social Club (Central Midland League Match) Match Programme November 5, 1988

such events – rose from the twenty/thirty or so required to sustain two football teams to the eighty-plus members required to sustain all of Cavaliers’ new sports provisions.⁶⁸⁰

The processes of black exclusion and marginalisation from mainstream leisure spaces which operated in Leicester during this period also helped ensure that early social events at the club were especially well attended. Kimber points out that during this period black youth in Britain were still experiencing forms of overt and covert exclusion from local night clubs and other mainstream social events.⁶⁸¹ Furthermore, only certain forms of black music were present within mainstream British music culture. These were largely commercial forms, such as, Motown and black disco. Alexander argues that more specialised - and arguably more ‘rootsy’ - forms of ‘black’ African-Caribbean music, such as ‘ragga’, ‘revival’, ‘lovers rock’ and soca, popular among various sections of Britain’s black youth, had still not forced their way into the record collections of most mainstream white DJs during the 1980s.⁶⁸² Like most cities which housed significant black communities then, in Leicester it was often those organically created African-Caribbean cultural spaces, such as illicit house (aka ‘blues’) parties which consequently, provided opportunities for this kind for black sociability.

This backcloth meant that throughout much of the 1980s, Cavaliers’ own black-centred social events were very well attended, were financially successful and they became significant spaces of sociability for Cavaliers’ cohort of often otherwise excluded young men:

In the early days ...we raised some tremendous funds from that clubhouse and bar. We had some fantastic functions. The potential was there. The spirit was there. The commitment was there. But as I say, times change (Bryan).

You know we had three teams here all winning! Presentation night was just a procession of trophies and cups and ...it was fantastic. All the players turned up to presentation night. We would all be sitting down in the old clubhouse eating rice and peas and we'd have a waiter service of food. They were great nights! (Louis)

⁶⁸⁰ Wilfred Manners, ‘Club membership’ *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994). Also see *Chapter 1*

⁶⁸¹ Nick Kimber, ‘Race and Equality’ in Pat Thane, eds., *Unequal Britain* (London, 2010)

⁶⁸² Claire Alexander, *The Art of Being Black* (Oxford, 1996)

Although such accounts are probably a little embroidered with the passing of time, the nostalgic manner in which the two men refer to the past popularity of Cavaliers' social events draws our attention to the fact that by the 1990s, the numbers of local black youth attending club functions were starting to decline. Concerns over the decreasing number of attendees were minuted at the club's 1994 AGM. These appear to substantiate this point (although exact figures were never mentioned). Furthermore, this development also underscores the ways in which notions of black solidarity were changing among a newly emerging and less community orientated third-generation of black youth. As numbers fell, a newly rebuilt clubhouse in 1994 brought an additional increase in costs to the Cavaliers club:⁶⁸³

Our new Clubhouse is now costing the Club more in running expenses and it is up to all of us to ensure that these costs are met by an increased income. Lettings and Social occasions can achieve this by ensuring bar sales are increased (Gordon).⁶⁸⁴

Despite Cavaliers' commercial secretary, Gordon's view that meeting these new costs was the responsibility of *all* club members, much of this responsibility actually fell within the remit of what was by now a ten-person Social Committee. This consisted of seven ex-Cavaliers football players, one ex-Cavaliers football manager and two women from the Cavaliers netball team; Grace and Geraldine (the latter was also the Social Secretary).⁶⁸⁵ To try to increase the club's membership and in turn boost revenues, that year the Social Committee piloted various non-football orientated provisions in an attempt to appeal to a wider black audience – in particular to women, families and the elderly (groups who were experiencing significantly higher levels of marginalisation in leisure and in sport than their younger and male peers).⁶⁸⁶ Prior to this point, Cavaliers' social functions had mainly coalesced around its predominantly young male membership. Led by Geraldine, not only was this arm of the organisation acutely aware

⁶⁸³ In 1993, the local council knocked down Cavaliers old clubhouse and rebuilt a new one in a different part of the ground due to a methane gas problem at the Parkview site.

⁶⁸⁴ Brian Meadows, 'Commercial Report' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

⁶⁸⁵ Geraldine Thorne, 'Social Secretary's Report' *Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual General Meeting 1993/94* (1994)

⁶⁸⁶ These provisions included: Theatre trips to Birmingham for black youth and for people interested in art and other forms of leisure (this was organised in conjunction with the Jamaican Community Service group); a Quiz Night for community elders and local families; and 'Keep Fit' sessions for women (Ibid.)

of this situation, but by 1993, it was actively and explicitly engaged in redressing this situation:

[T]he introduction of other social activities i.e. Quiz Nights, theatre trips and Keep fit sessions have had a good overall response. These functions had as many, if not more, women as men in attendance unlike the members *[sic]* social evenings (and sports), which are male dominated. In my opinion, more social activities geared towards attracting both sexes and the family would be serving the Community more fairly and boosting Club membership. I would predict... a very busy and profitable year ahead if the above points are taken into consideration and put on their Agenda. (Geraldine)⁶⁸⁷

Placing the development of Cavaliers' social functions within the 'larger context' c.1981-1992

What were the wider influences behind the decision of Cavaliers members to offer wider social provisions for the local black community? The decision to use the Cavaliers space to provide opportunities for multiply-excluded sections of the local black community and, in turn, to use the club to provide community development provisions beyond sport, appeared to be facilitated by more than just a need to increase revenue. Below I argue that it was connected to a wave of political strategies designed to re-enfranchise urban youth, movements that were influenced by evolving notions of black solidarity at the local, national and international levels.

The Independent's Jonathan Foster, highlights the fact that in the aftermath of the urban riots in 1981, more British Government funding was channelled into urban based and black led community projects.⁶⁸⁸ These were designed to provide sections of the black community with the social and professional tools (and support networks) required to achieve varying degrees of upward social and economic mobility. In many ways the Cavaliers club's ambitions to cross over into the community-development sphere can be seen as connected to these political developments.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Jonathan Foster, 'Football with a Community Goal: Cavaliers are going to train bankers' *The Independent* February 17, 1992

The determination and awareness of various club members, such as Geraldine, to create pathways into leisure for other excluded groups and for black women in particular, can be seen as something which was influenced by a growing recognition of the marginalised black *female* experience. It was also undoubtedly influenced by a burgeoning trans-Atlantic black feminist sensibility emerging at all social levels during this period.⁶⁸⁹ Additionally, the desire to offer provisions for marginalised members of the local black community can also be seen as linked to the kinds of class-based notions of community obligation which were beginning to emerge among a small number of Cavaliers' upwardly mobile members (see *Chapter 6*).

Gilroy and Carrington both remind us that this developing political awareness and growing senses of black solidarity among black Britons within the local context must also be linked to developments beyond Britain.⁶⁹⁰ As discussed previously, the notion of a 'black diaspora consciousness' enables us to view shifts in local perceptions of blackness and 'black possibility' as part of a dynamic and global black identity network. Kimber, for example, links many of the political mobilisations which took place locally to political developments and uprisings taking place within the United States and South Africa during the last decades of the twentieth century.⁶⁹¹ The influence of events such as the anti-apartheid movement on local expressions of black identity is also evidenced, superficially at least, in the Cavaliers first-team's pseudo-'black power' salute prior to a local cup final in 1987.⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁹ Within the sphere of popular culture, the 1980s witnessed the emergence of a stronger, more assertive and more politically conscious black woman, particularly within the black American music industry. Such artists included Grace Jones and Janet Jackson. In Britain, what we might describe as various 'black feminist' political groups also emerged during this period. This included the *Southall Black Sister* and the *Organisation of Women of Asian and African Decent* (OWAAD). Among other things, OWAAD challenged the existing and white feminist movement for failing to acknowledge the plight of black, Asian and minority ethnic women. See Collette and Laybourn, 'Ethnicity and Racial Equality' p247

⁶⁹⁰ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London, 1987); *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London, 1993); Ben Carrington, *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora* (London, 2010);

⁶⁹¹ Kimber, 'Race and Equality'

⁶⁹² 'Setting off in confident mood for the Caribbean Times Cup Final, 1987' (photograph) in John Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* (Leicester, 1993) p67

These interconnected social, political and cultural connections remind us that the politicisation of black consciousness locally needs to be placed within: a) the local Leicester/British context; b) a wider trans-Atlantic context and c) the context of influences of class mobilisation on black consciousness. This recognition is significant if we are accurately to contextualise the Cavaliers members' nascent ambitions to use the club as a space which could formally 'mobilise' their local black community in ways beyond sport. The section which follows addresses aspects of this mobilisation in Leicester.

A football club which offered 'real' solutions to 'real' world issues: Community development projects and the Cavaliers club

In 1992, *The Independent* newspaper reported that:

Large sums of public money were spent in the Meadebrooks area to encourage enterprise in the aftermath of riots in 1981... [F]ootball clubs around the country formed from ethnic minority groups are increasingly becoming the focus of community projects funded by the public sector.⁶⁹³

As a part of this wave of publicly funded community development projects, which were led by BAME (sports) organisations, the Cavaliers club was responsible for two schemes between 1982 and 1992. Funded by the Manpower Services Commission, Cavaliers firstly offered a small scale and short term painting and decorating training scheme for black people launched in 1982.⁶⁹⁴ It consisted of eight trainees (this number included various Cavaliers players). It offered on-the-job training as trainees painted properties across the city. Although short-lived, club Chairman, Hugh explained that the project's successes had been both tangible and social: "From those schemes, I can show you ...businesses [painted] plus ...people, who, as a result, have gone on to more skill training and further education".⁶⁹⁵ The history of Cavaliers' second community development project, *the Meadebrooks Training Project* (MTP), however, is more complex.

⁶⁹³ Foster, 'Football with a Community Goal: Cavaliers are going to train bankers'

⁶⁹⁴ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History*

⁶⁹⁵ Foster, 'Football with a Community Goal: Cavaliers are going to train bankers'

Glyptis points out that in ‘1976 the Sport Council instigated a special grant aid scheme to assist projects in “Areas of Special Need”’.⁶⁹⁶ She elucidates that ‘new programmes were funded to develop sport in urban and other deprived areas.’⁶⁹⁷ Funded by the Sports Council in 1981 (and prior to the riots), three sport and urban based schemes designed to provide opportunities for the unemployed were piloted in Derwentside, Hockley Port (Birmingham) - and Leicester.⁶⁹⁸ After the riots, more urban based – and BAME focused – sport orientated community schemes emerged across the Midlands. Again they focused primarily on the urban unemployed and the socially deviant. These schemes included the *Inner City Coaching Initiative* (Birmingham) and the *Meadebrooks Community Coaching Project* (MCCP) launched in 1987 and 1989 respectively. The aim of the latter scheme was to provide local unemployed black people in Leicester with sport related ‘work experience, training and qualifications’ as they supervised a local activities scheme that summer.⁶⁹⁹

There was a strong Cavaliers presence within the MCCP as both service users and importantly, as key drivers within the planning, management and operationalization of the project.⁷⁰⁰ In what we might view as a development which was brought about by certain Cavaliers members’ involvement in the MCCP, alongside their own burgeoning desires to assist the wider black community, in 1989 the Cavaliers club began planning for its own training project, the Meadebrooks Training Project (MTP).

Importantly, the MTP was designed to offer experience and formal qualifications within spheres beyond sport. In an application for funds from the Football Trust in November 1990, for example, Cavaliers highlighted that previous local black community provision in Leicester had been too ‘narrow’ and had been overly-rooted in the sporting context.⁷⁰¹ Counterpoised to this, the objective of Cavaliers’ MTP was to provide young

⁶⁹⁶ Glyptis, ‘Local Authority Sports Provision for the Unemployed: The UK Experience’ p102

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁹ *Meadebrooks Community Coaching Project* (no date given) para.1.2

⁷⁰⁰ *Meadebrooks Community Coaching Project - 28TH February 1989; Minutes of Follow-up meeting, 3.3.89’; Minutes of Meeting held at Old Moat Boys’ School 14TH February 1989; Minutes of Meadebrooks Community Coaching Project Held On Tuesday 23rd May 1989 at Old Moat Boys School [sic]; M.C.C.P Management Meeting – 2nd February 1990 held at Moat College*

⁷⁰¹ Management Committee: Meadebrook Cavaliers Community Development Project, *Application for funds from the Football Trust/IT Fund New Initiative* November, 1990

people (initially, under 21), local and predominantly black trainees, with the confidence and social and economic capital required to access Leicester's white collar employment sector.

This goal would be achieved by providing trainees with both work experience and formal qualifications in the financial sector. Trainees would gain these skills through a combination of days spent on work placements within local businesses - obtained through the Equal Opportunities Commission;⁷⁰² and days spent attending courses - which led to nationally recognised and formal qualifications in Banking, Building Societies, Accountancy and General Financial Services.⁷⁰³ *The Independent* reported that Cavaliers received £250,000 from the government to fund the MTP for 4 years.⁷⁰⁴ Much of this funding came via the Urban Programme.⁷⁰⁵ As a BAME led community development project, the MTP sat alongside other BAME community development projects within the East Midlands.⁷⁰⁶

After a rigorous advertising campaign (4000 leaflets were distributed throughout the local area) in 1992 the MTP was launched. That year it took on 17 recruits.⁷⁰⁷ Project Leader, Dr. Eugene Eastern highlighted the successes of the first year in the achievements of one trainee, Bernadine Campbell, who, after completing one-month's training at Midland Bank, was requested to stay for a further three months. This was, according to Eastern, due to her 'commitment to learn and achieve'.⁷⁰⁸ Eastern pointed to such successes as a contributor to the significant increase in applications to the MTP

⁷⁰² CT Incorporating African Times, 'The 22 Year Old Leicester Football Club That Gave Birth to a Training Project' *The Caribbean Times* October 6, 1992

⁷⁰³ Qualifications included Manual Book keeping (accredited by the Royal Society of Arts), Computerised Accounts (accredited by Wetherby Training Services) and Business Administration (BTEC level 1 to a 1st National Certificate). See Eugene Eastern, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Training Project Annual Report 1993 -1994* (1994) Sub-section 4. Also see *Meadebrook Cavaliers Training Project Leaflet*

⁷⁰⁴ Foster, 'Football with a Community Goal: Cavaliers are going to train bankers'

⁷⁰⁵ Policy & Resources (Economic Development) Sub Committee/Policy & Resources (Equal opportunities & Personnel) Sub-Committee, *Review of Training 1993/94: Report of the Director of Environment and Development; Summary* (September, 1994) para. 5.9

⁷⁰⁶ These included: the *Belgrave Community Workshop*, *Liberty Housing Co-operative* and the *Foundation Training Project Limited*. The provisions offered by these other schemes included, 'office and carpentry skills' for those predominantly in the 'Asian community'; accommodation for women; and 'carpentry and joinery training for those within the African Caribbean community', respectively (Ibid. para 5.8-11)

⁷⁰⁷ Eastern, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Training Project Annual Report 1993 -1994* Sub-section 5

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid. Sub-section 1

the following year. This prompted the MTP to abandon its original under-21 age-limit. This in turn, resulted in three-times as many trainees being taken on in the following year (up to 43).⁷⁰⁹

The club's community development achievements – albeit briefly lived - captured the attention of the national press. *The Independent* for example, described the Cavaliers club as 'the most successful agency for training...' in Leicester's Meadebrook district.⁷¹⁰ That year, the *Caribbean Times* described the MTP as 'the only one of its kind' and that the project 'marked another first for the African-Caribbean community'.⁷¹¹ Likewise, local councillors claimed that of all the self-help projects set up in the wake of the 1981 riots, 'only Cavaliers has flourished as a means of advancement for black people...'⁷¹²

The briefly experienced capacity to successfully provide opportunities beyond sport contributed to a growing sentiment within the club that Cavaliers' singular and football orientated objective had now changed. Some members, for example, argued that alongside trying to achieve sporting success, the Cavaliers club now had a dual responsibility to also help develop the wider local black community in more diverse ways:

The direction has changed in as much as we are far, far more than just a football club now. We recognize we have a role to play in the community... we would like to get involved in economic and educational development.⁷¹³

...I would like to see the club as a multi-disciplined complex; football coupled with the educational aspect of it"⁷¹⁴

This debate over Cavaliers' '*raison d'être*' facilitated further divisions amongst both club members and management during a period which was characterised by an

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Foster, 'Football with a Community Goal: Cavaliers are going to train bankers'

⁷¹¹ CT Incorporating African Times, 'The 22 Year Old Leicester Football Club that gave Birth to a Training Project'

⁷¹² Foster, 'Football with a Community Goal: Cavaliers are going to train bankers'

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p122

increasingly complex club membership. Bryan argued that trying to be a community organisation as well as trying to be a successful football club was simply impractical:

[I]magine a set of guys, who have full time jobs... trying to run a football club with all those teams and training projects. You can imagine how much time and energy it takes out of you... it is not realistic.

Other club members perceived these diversions to be an inadvertent threat to the kind of organisation Cavaliers had once been, and the kind of organisation this cohort wanted it to remain – a sports club:

What I don't want to see is the club lose sight of the very reason the club came in to being; which is football.⁷¹⁵

Someone asked me about Cavaliers' future ten years ago and my answer is the same now: I would like to see the club go in to the Football League.⁷¹⁶

The dominance of this last position among Cavaliers' wider membership and, importantly, among certain key voices within the club's management committee, was especially reflected in the frustrations voiced by those employees who drove the MTP:

I feel that sometimes the project [MTP], although an integral part of the Cavaliers organisation, often works in isolation.... there seems to be little interest from the general membership. While I do understand the commitment members have towards the sports side of the club... the training project is an important aspect of the Cavaliers... (Dr. Eugene Eastern)⁷¹⁷

The MTP came to an abrupt end when its funding expired in 1995. After this, much of this debate about wider community development versus football became redundant, as the MTP represented Cavaliers' last formally funded community development activity for the following decade-and-a-half. Subsequently, achieving football success remained the management committee's primary mission - and football remained the dominant identity feature of the Cavaliers club – at least that is until 2007.

⁷¹⁵ cited in Williams, *Meadebrook Cavaliers: An Oral History* p123

⁷¹⁶ Ibid. p125

⁷¹⁷ Eastern, *Meadebrook Cavaliers Training Project Annual Report 1993 -1994* Sub-section 5

A space for community integration, cohesion, development and more: The Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual Fun Day

Here - rather ambitiously – I want to try to achieve four things. Firstly, I want to describe the origins of the Cavaliers club’s annual Fun Day carnival. I then want to highlight how this activity – and its community cohesion function – has arguably become a dominant feature of the ways in which the Cavaliers club is currently presented, especially within the city’s local newspaper, the *Leicester Mercury*. Additionally, I will sketch out how this representation is a relatively recent development (one which has taken place over the last decade). Furthermore, I briefly highlight how this new direction has taken place and how it reflects changes within wider ‘race-relations’ discourses and agendas at the local and national level. Lastly, I argue that by the end of this period, the popular representation of the Cavaliers club locally, as a key city space for community cohesion and integration (community development), was something which the club’s management committee itself has actively sought to convey.

What were the origins of the Fun Day? The Cavaliers club has little archival data regarding the formation of its now annual Fun Day carnival. Prior to 2010, for example, there is no reliable data regarding the number of people who attended the club’s Fun Days, or the demographics of its attendees. Additionally, oral accounts are often conflicting. There is, for example, little consensus on various points of historical interest, such as: who originally coined the idea; who was involved in the original project; how much support did the event get from the management committee; and what was the event’s objectives – beyond generating additional revenue. So the precise origins of the Fun Day are somewhat unclear. What is apparent, however, is that the first Fun Day event took place on May bank holiday 1985, and that this date was chosen to avoid clashing with the much larger London-based Caribbean Carnival.⁷¹⁸ It has since remained on this date to avoid clashing with the more modest Leicester Caribbean Carnival (which started later that same year).⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁸ Fieldwork Journal May 30, 2011

⁷¹⁹ ‘Carnival Fun with Calypso Flavour’ *Leicester Mercury* August 5, 1985

How was the Fun Day been reported in the local media during the period between 1985 and 2010? The following extract from a 2005 *Mercury* article, which also briefly detailed the history of Cavaliers, provides a useful demonstration of the ways in which the Cavaliers club – typically via its Fun Day event – has been covered by the local press as an organisation which is explicitly about community development, integration and more recently, inter-ethnic cohesion.

Meadebrook Cavaliers is about much more than football, getting the wider community involved where possible. Their annual May fun day has become a highlight for locals, while the Cavaliers developed employment and training schemes set up to address high unemployment in the area during the eighties. When it comes to football... the ethos behind the club is that everyone is welcome to come and play whatever part of the city or county they hail from... and play whatever your ability...⁷²⁰

By the same token, Cavaliers as a signpost for local ‘blackness’ and black football has arguably become an implicit message within the local paper. The *Mercury*’s tribute article to the 40th anniversary of the Cavaliers club in 2010, for example, was no simple celebration of local African-Caribbean mobilisation through sport. This was a celebration, instead, of Meadebrook Cavaliers as a ‘melting pot’ and a symbol of an ethnically diverse, culturally integrated and successfully modern Leicester. As the *Mercury* put it: ‘What was once just a group of mates playing football has transformed, over the last 40 years, into one of the greatest achievements of multi-cultural Leicester.’⁷²¹ Based on the club’s 2010 Fun Day event, the article’s narrative was backed up with various quotes taken from attendees of all ages, all cultures and from all levels of Leicester’s social strata:

The club is great because everyone has a laugh...

I always look forward to it...

(British white, 13 year-old Quade Russell, and 9 year-old dual heritage, Emmanuel Chiedozie, respectively)⁷²²

I love the fact that the club is driven by the different communities in Leicester. There are Afghans, Romanians, Somalians, Caribbeans and I’m dual heritage

⁷²⁰ ‘Happy 35th Birthday Meadebrook Cavaliers’ *Leicester Mercury* August 20, 2005

⁷²¹ Tom Mack, ‘Club’s Birthday Proves to be a Real Knockout’ *Leicester Mercury* June 1, 2010

⁷²² Ibid.

myself... It's community cohesion in action. We all come together and play together. (my italics). (Dual Heritage, 40 year-old Emanuel Chiedozie)⁷²³

The contribution this club has made to Leicester is huge – not just as a sports club but as a social organisation involving so many of the minority ethnic communities.’ (Lord Mayor of Leicester, Colin Hall)⁷²⁴

To further underline its claims, the article was framed using overtly ‘cohesive’ imagery taken at the Fun Day event. Two of the article’s three photographs, contained white children joyfully playing at the African-Caribbean staged event. Any doubt about Cavaliers’ Fun Day’s role as a culturally unifying space in Leicester was expunged in the last picture, which showed Fun Day attendees pulling on the same side in a tug-of-war competition. Of the 12 people at the forefront of the image, three seem to be of direct African or African-Caribbean descent, three are dual heritage and five are white (including the Lord Major, Colin Hall). Its caption pointedly read, ‘Pulling Together’.⁷²⁵ Through its representation via the local paper, Cavaliers’ contemporary identity and the club’s wider history, appears to be as much about demonstrating community development and community cohesion as it is about winning football matches and celebrating local black sporting success – in fact, arguably more so.

Significantly, between 1985 and 2000, the *Mercury*’s coverage of the Cavaliers Fun Day was largely non-existent. This was despite frequent coverage of other local BAME festivities, such as, the 10-Ul-Adha celebration in 1996,⁷²⁶ the Vaisakhi celebrations in 1999⁷²⁷ and the local paper’s annual coverage of the city’s Caribbean Carnival from 1985 onwards. From around 2000 onwards, however, articles on the Cavaliers Fun Day began to appear annually in the community section of the local paper. However, initially these were predominantly in the form of public notifications. The extracts below are typical examples:

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ See ‘In A Spin’ (photograph) and ‘Pulling Together’ (photograph) in Mack, ‘Club’s Birthday Proves to be a Real Knockout’, respectively.

⁷²⁶ ‘Sunni Muslims Mark Festival’ *Leicester Mercury* May 2, 1996

⁷²⁷ ‘1,500 in Cultural Celebrations’ *Leicester Mercury* June 1, 1999

MEADEBROOK Cavaliers are holding their Annual Family Fun Day on Bank Holiday Monday, from 12noon to 6pm at Parkview Lane.⁷²⁸

MEADEBROOK Cavaliers Annual Fun Day takes place this Bank Holiday Monday... offering a range of activities for all the family...⁷²⁹

MEADEBROOK Cavaliers will be holding their annual fund-raising family fun day on Monday... The day promises a wide range of entertainment and activities for the whole family.⁷³⁰

It is important to note of course that the changes in the way in which the Cavaliers club has been presented, and the increasing attention given to the Fun Day by the local media over the last decade, has taken place against the backdrop of a shifting multicultural agenda at local and national levels.⁷³¹ Solomos, for example, argues that since the clashes between police and men mainly of Pakistani decent in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001, and the events of 9/11 and 7/7, 'race relations' discourses in Britain have changed significantly.⁷³² Likewise, Pilkington connotes that the 'how to live with difference' discourses which surrounded New Labour's arrival in 1997, by the end of 2001 were increasingly trumped by discourses and policies aimed at how to 'integrate them'.⁷³³

In response to the findings of various national and local community cohesion centred investigations, local authorities were instructed to produce 'Community Cohesion

⁷²⁸ 'Don't Miss Fun' *Leicester Mercury* May 25, 2000

⁷²⁹ 'Annual Fun Day for all the Family' *Leicester Mercury* May 24, 2001

⁷³⁰ 'Activities for all at Family Fun Day' *Leicester Mercury* May 22, 2003

⁷³¹ For a comprehensive discussion on the changing multiculturalism discourses which shape late-modern Britain, Ted Cattle's, *Community Cohesion* (London, 2005), Margaret Wetherell's 'Speaking to Power: Tony Blair, Complex Multicultures and Fragile White English Identities' *Critical Social Policy* (28) 3 (2008) pp.299-319, and Andrew Pilkington's 'From Institutional Racism to Community Cohesion: the Changing Nature of Racial Discourse in Britain' *Sociological Research Online* (13) 3 (2008) all provide a useful introduction. Likewise, for an introductory discussion on the construction and conveyance of 'race' (relations) discourses through national and local media in Britain, see Sarita Malik's, *Representing Black Britain* (London, 2002) and also Lorna Chessum's 'Race and Immigration in the Leicester Local Press 1945-62' *Immigrants & Minorities* (17) 2 (1998) pp.36-56

⁷³² John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain* (3rd ed.) (Basingstoke, 2003) p219-220

⁷³³ Pilkington, 'From Institutional Racism to Community Cohesion: the Changing Nature of Racial Discourse in Britain' para.10.2; Also see John Rex and Gurhpal Singh, 'Multiculturalism and Political Integration in Modern Nation-States: Thematic Introduction' *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (5) 1 (2003) pp.3-20

Plans' (CCP).⁷³⁴ These were designed to, among other things, alleviate mounting tensions between sections of Britain's different ethnic communities. As part of its resultant Community Cohesion Strategy, in 2007 the Leicester City Council explained to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, that: '[t]he policy of *all* the city's media is ...not to print or broadcast anything that might aggravate local race and/or community relations.'⁷³⁵ By the same token, the local press was expected to promote stories which could be expected to have the opposite outcome.

This provides some wider context for the *Mercury's* increasing use and representation of the Cavaliers club as a late-modern example of 'multicultural Leicester.'⁷³⁶ Although this relationship is undoubtedly open to debate, it does appear to provide some context for what we might loosely describe as the pro-multicultural 'Disney-fication' of the Cavaliers image.⁷³⁷ The representation of the organisation in this way, however, was also and explicitly connected to a changing agenda *within* the Cavaliers club. The representation of the Fun Day as a central feature within the club's contemporary identity, and the presentation of the club more widely as a space for community development, is something which Cavaliers' management committee had actively sought to portray – particularly in the post 2007 period. This was largely the result of a combination of various new financial pressures brought about by the much harsher economic conditions which shaped post-2008 Britain. It was also underpinned by the end of the club's local government maintenance grant and the resultant urgent need to access new funding streams.

Against a back drop of a greater national and local emphasis on community integration and cohesion, local government funding was increasingly redirected to community activities and 'events which brought communities together and promoted cohesion'

⁷³⁴ The Improvement and Development Agency, *Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester City Council* (no date given) para.1.3

⁷³⁵ Leicester City Council/Leicester Partnership Community Cohesion Project Team, *Evidence to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion From the Community Cohesion Project Team: Representing the Leicester City Council and the Leicester Partnership* (January, 2007) p6 Also see Trisha Roberts-Thompson, eds., 'Explaining Community Cohesion in Leicester' (Leicester City Council, 2008)

⁷³⁶ Mack, 'Club's Birthday Proves to be a Real Knockout'

⁷³⁷ John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (3rd ed.) (Harlow, 2001) Chapter 7: 'Postmodernism'

rather than ‘...supporting events for single communities.’⁷³⁸ The increasing importance to local and central Government agencies of community projects which provide this function was confirmed in 2007, when central government raised the level of community cohesion funding from £2m to £50m.⁷³⁹ It was also recommended that, from this point onwards, community projects should be required to ‘demonstrate their commitment to integration and cohesion’.⁷⁴⁰ Locally, this translated into the Leicester Community Cohesion Fund (CCF) stipulating that community funding would only be accessed by activities and projects which could formally – or empirically - evidence how they had achieved, at least, one of the following:

- Brought different communities together (to build bridges)
- Assisted (new) communities to grow and bond together
- Assisted people in Leicester to view diversity as a strength
- Aided adults and young people to get on well together
- Addressed tensions between and within communities⁷⁴¹

As local government officers in their working lives, many of Cavaliers’ current management committee members and coaches (which still consisted of predominantly second-generation African-Caribbeans, many of whom were ex-Cavaliers players) were highly sensitive to these kinds of changes in community project funding requirements. Subsequently, many of the same committee members who had previously attempted to keep the Cavaliers club’s primary identity as a black-centred and sporting one for the last two decades, conceded that this was something which now represented an obstacle in their new attempts to access local funding within this harsher contemporary climate:

We are not hitting the funding targets anymore... the goalposts have changed. [As a football club] we cannot... reach the requirement for funding! (Matthew, ex-Cavaliers player and current club member)⁷⁴²

⁷³⁸ Leicester City Council, *The Community Cohesion Fund 2004-2006* (2004)

⁷³⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government, *The Government’s Response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion* (2008)

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid. p54

⁷⁴¹ Leicester City Council, *Community Cohesion Fund: January – June 2011 Guidance and Application Form* (2010)

⁷⁴² Fieldwork Journal February 9, 2011

As a football club we are not gonna' get any funding anymore! Getting capital money?! No way! ...Not as a football club. (Hugh)⁷⁴³

In this new climate, activities such as Cavaliers' community orientated Fun Day and the club's culturally and gender inclusive mini-soccer division, were identified as provisions which would enable the club to qualify for this type of local government funding. Subsequently, since 2007, these activities increasingly occupy a central territory within club press releases, television work, and more recently, on the club's new website (launched in 2011).⁷⁴⁴ The financial benefits of this manoeuvre and the importance of cultural cohesion projects to local Government sources, was demonstrated by Leicester CCF's decision to award the club £10,000 to hold its 2010 Fun Day event. This represented the largest funding award the club had ever received for hosting a one-day community event. Also, it represented the largest CCF award for a one-day community development event in the city that year.⁷⁴⁵ In order to measure the club's effectiveness as a space for community development – and to justify the local council's financial support - Cavaliers conducted its first Fun Day survey at the 2010 carnival. It is to the results of this survey to which the chapter now turns.

Cohesion, integration and black identity maintenance: An analysis of the Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual Fun Day 2010

*At the Fun Day, many of the club's eleven acres of grass and four full-size-football pitches were hidden behind a combination of bouncy castles, climbing walls, rodeos, tents, stalls and inflatable rides, and hidden under hundreds of people. All of which surrounded a stage under a marquee, where hundreds of people, black, white, Asian alike, watched and participated in various performances. These included a local African-Caribbean and Indian dance troupe, steel drums, have-a-go performances from people in the crowd, and a stand-up comedian.*⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ During an interview on the BBC's *East Midlands Tonight* programme, when asked about Cavaliers' sporting history, Director of Football at Cavaliers, Louis chose to explicitly highlight the Cavaliers club's cohesive function (as did the programmes' editor): "...from the first day the club was formed, Cavaliers has always had a rich mix of black Caribbean players, Asian players, white players..." 'East Midlands Tonight' *BBC 1*, February 8, 2010) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xa_Kot0zLWzg (accessed on: 15.12.2011). Also see <http://www.pitchero.com/clubs/MeadebrookCavaliers> (accessed on: 15.12.2011)

⁷⁴⁵ Leicester City Council, *Community Cohesion Fund 2010-11 Projects*

⁷⁴⁶ Fieldwork Journal May 31, 2010

On May 31 2010, 1,503 people attended the Meadebrook Cavaliers Annual Fun Day. During the event 98 attendees participated in the Fun Day survey.⁷⁴⁷ Although using a predominantly quantitative methodology, the survey contained a small number of ‘open’ questions. This provided scope for some – albeit limited - qualitative elaboration. Commenting on the use of this method, Bradbury points out that it is impossible to provide a ‘wholly accurate picture’ from this type of analysis.⁷⁴⁸ We must acknowledge the associated difficulties when attempting to move from the responses gathered here, to broader and more ‘concrete analytical conclusions’.⁷⁴⁹ Cavaliers also conducted the survey in order to *prove* its community cohesion credentials. Notwithstanding this problem, by drawing on the participants’ responses, this section aims to explore what the results can tell us with regards to:

- Which local communities the Fun Day ‘brought together’, in terms of age, ethnicity, and geography
- What social/community outputs the Fun Day offers local communities in late-modern Leicester, beyond the headline issues of social cohesion and integration

Bridging communities

In the context of (crudely) demonstrating community cohesion via the number of different types of people in attendance, the survey data indicated that the Fun Day successfully brought together a range of people from across the age, ethnicity and geographical spectrum. With regards to age, those aged between 0-18 and 31-40 were the two largest groups represented (23% and 28% respectively). The over 65s were the lowest represented group with just 4%. In the context of culture and ethnicity, the results suggested that the Fun Day proved to be particularly diverse, with twelve of the sixteen ethnic groups listed in the 2001 census represented. Those who self-identified as Black or Black British Caribbean (28%); White British (28%); Dual heritage: White and

⁷⁴⁷ The survey was designed by the author. The participants were selected at random between noon and 5pm, by four interviewees positioned in different areas within the grounds (one of which was the author).

⁷⁴⁸ Bradbury, ‘From Racial Exclusions to New Inclusions: Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Football Clubs in the East Midlands of England’ p7

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

Black Caribbean (20%); and Asian or Asian British: Indian (8%), were the four largest ethnic groups represented. The data collected also suggests that the event was astonishingly successful in terms of local geographical reach. It was attended by individuals drawn from 17 of the city's 22 electoral wards.

If we draw solely on the quantitative data, a persuasive picture emerges which indicates the Fun Day was also an impressive site for the expression of community cohesion, by linking people from Leicester's African-Caribbean heritage background and local white communities. The representation of Asian or Asian British or Indian people, when compared to these two groups were significantly lower. This would, superficially at least, suggest that this latter group might be less motivated to integrate than those communities thus far mentioned. The *qualitative* responses from some Asian-Indian heritage attendees, however, indicated an explicit desire to integrate with their non-Asian and/or non-Indian heritage neighbours. It also indicated a willingness to show support for the Cavaliers club. The following responses to the question, "What attracted you to the event?" are typical in this respect:

Supporting the club, meeting friends and seeing different kinds of faces (Asian or Asian British: Indian)

Opportunity for children to play and mix with other (heritage) children (Asian or Asian British: Indian)

An opportunity to support a local club (Asian or Asian British: Indian)

It is perhaps the last response which most clearly points to how the club may also be fostering new fusions and establishing some common cultural ground between a small section of the local South Asian community and the African-Caribbean club (two communities whose local trajectories and histories thus far, have remained largely parallel and apart). The responses suggested that this new fusion is based on shared geographic locality, and not on crude racial or racially aligned cultural markers/affiliations. It appears that for some of the local South Asians in attendance, for whom the apparent black-Asian/'us and them' divide between the two communities may not be as relevant as it is to others within *both* communities, the Fun Day offered an opportunity to express/demonstrate their support for what they evidently view to be

their local football club. This is apparently irrespective of the fact that the club's cultural and racial origins are markedly different to their own.

The Fun Day: beyond community cohesion and towards an opportunity to re-engage with a specific kind of 'Caribbean culture'

*The staged events at the Fun Day took place against a backdrop of loud calypso music and the smell of freshly cooking curry goat and jerk chicken emanating from the many food stalls. From the moment I entered the fun day, smelled the food and heard the music, I found it impossible as a black man who exists mostly in 'Caribbean-culture-less' environments, not to be overwhelmed by feelings of nostalgia.*⁷⁵⁰

An opportunity to experience what was frequently described as the 'Caribbean culture' (food/music/atmosphere) was the second most cited attraction of the Fun Day by survey respondents (13%). Notably, this percentage nearly doubled for black or Black British: Caribbean respondents aged between 0-18 (20%). For those who listed themselves as Dual Heritage: White and Black Caribbean, aged between 0-18, the percentage of these who sought out 'Caribbean Culture' rose again to 40%. While the number of participants and the methodology might be questioned, the data does prompt us to question the possibilities for Caribbean heritage youth in late-modern Leicester to regularly access this kind of black culture elsewhere in the city. It also perhaps suggests something about how these black spaces may be employed as cultural oases by some of the Fun Day's British-African-Caribbean heritage attendees.

It can be tentatively argued that, today, late-modern 'blackness' and the white British mainstream has, in uneven ways and to varying degrees of course, show signs of racial, social and cultural fusion. This is strongly indicated for example in the words of Cavaliers' Director of Football, Louis:

We've integrated fabulously...We have dual heritage children. We have mixed marriages. There's been an understanding and fusion of cultures which has brought out this new black Caribbean community [which] is far more rounded, more flexible.

⁷⁵⁰ Fieldwork Journal May 31, 2010

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the production of this alleged more ‘rounded and flexible’ hybrid British black identity has brought with it a sense of cultural growth *and* a real sense of loss. It is within the context of how some of the black attendees use the Fun Day to negotiate or resist this apparent cultural ‘loss’, however, that the event’s social functions - beyond cultural cohesion - become most apparent. In many ways the Meadebrooks area today, possesses relatively few *obvious* physical Caribbean markers. Many of the old black spaces/buildings, which were once central to establishing the black community in the city, often resemble under-used resources today. Arguably, these spaces appear to be increasingly socially irrelevant to growing numbers of a new generation African-Caribbeans within the city. This description can also be extended to those historic social spaces/events such as, blues parties and in turn, so-called ‘black’ nightclubs. For the initial decades of settlement, these represented some of the few spaces of ‘safe’ black sociability in Leicester. This was where some first and second-generation migrants living in Britain, people who sought out this kind of entertainment, could access and socialise to music which they considered emblematic of a certain kind of ‘Caribbean culture’ which they brought with them to Britain. This included music such as, calypso and soca.

These sorts of spaces were once typically described by the British black community as culturally essential; places where they could ‘enjoy their own music, food and drink, among their own people [and] where they [could] enjoy themselves in their own way...’⁷⁵¹ Factors such as generational identity fracturing and an embrace of many modern forms of ‘black-entertainment’ within the British urban music mainstream,⁷⁵² however has, to varying degrees, made these events much less important and relevant by subsequent generations of African-Caribbean youth. By the same token, this perhaps more traditional ‘black’ sound – and experience – has become a less common feature of the contemporary urban social landscape. Against this, the Fun Day data suggests that for pockets of young Caribbean-heritage attendees who are either curious about, or simply enjoy, this now more elusive ‘Caribbean’ experience (captured today, in events

⁷⁵¹ ‘Annex D: ‘No Room in the Inn...’ Select Committee on Race Relations & Immigration, *Session 1975-76, The West Indian Community: Minutes of evidence; Thursday, 4th December, 1975, Leicester United Caribbean Association, West Indian Organisation Co-ordinate Committee*

⁷⁵² Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*

such as the Leicester Caribbean Carnival), the Fun Day represents a rare juncture in late-modern Leicester. A recovered cultural space where they can experience, in a stylised form, the unique cultural ways of their (grand)parents.

The Fun Day also attracted a number of young Caribbean-heritage parents, some of whom claimed they were raising ‘black’ or dual heritage children within white dominated geographical, cultural and racial spaces. These are ‘black’ children who their parents perceive to be significantly more accustomed to white cultural norms, than black-Caribbean ones. For these participants, the ‘black’ space of the Fun Day carnival seems to represent an opportunity to redress what they perceive to be a cultural imbalance within their own children’s lives. In short, these participants argue that these kind of Caribbean-centred events are opportunities to briefly immerse their children in this kind of ‘lost’ black cultural experience. As explained by one black parent who (for work reasons) had moved his family to a remote location in Yorkshire, where apparently black faces are rare and spaces and events which celebrate ‘black’ culture (beyond abstract lessons during black history month) were largely non-existent:

I want him [his dual heritage son] to see, basically, more my [Caribbean] side of things.... Instead of seeing one black person, he needs to see more. And that we are here in numbers. [That we are] not an oddity...Basically, I want him to understand that he has a [Caribbean] cultural heritage ...He doesn’t seem to realise there is more to it... There is a flavour. It is from another place and he has that in him. He is a part of that...

Pertinently, for this participant, ‘Caribbean culture’ was not a performance or an abstract concept, but a lived and tangible experience. It was rooted within particular sounds, smells and importantly, the tastes of Caribbean life. This was an aroma, or living culture, which for him – and possibly other Caribbeans of his generation - conjured up poignant memories of their Caribbean-centred-upbringing. For this participant the idea that these distinctly Caribbean sounds, smells and tastes (which he was apparently unable to recreate) which characterised the households of his parents’ generation might be alien to – or even be rejected by - his white immersed, dual-heritage son, was unacceptable. This was the primary reason why he was prepared to drive over 200 miles to bring his son to the Cavaliers Fun Day:

I want him to get into the music... I want him to get into the food. I am quite limited on what I can actually cook. Even if he doesn't taste it... but to *smell it*, to *see it*. So that it's not unusual [to him]. It has a history; a history which belongs to us!

In the context of this difficulty for some middle-aged and some older Caribbeans to engage with, or reconstruct, what they perceive to be important musical and culinary African-Caribbean cultural markers, another (and black specific) social role played by the Fun Day becomes apparent. It appears that alongside events such as the Leicester Carnival, the Fun Day represents an apparently rare opportunity for those African-Caribbeans, old and young, near and far, to re-engage with, or dip back into, this kind of increasingly elusive Caribbean culture. This sense is captured in the response given by a 30-something female, black British participant when she was asked what attracted her to the Fun Day? She replied: 'Music and the dancing [and] you've got the food... You have got lots of black people together in celebration! ...You don't get that every day.'

Concluding comments

The primary aim of the chapter has been to provide a brief account of the changing role of the Cavaliers club as a space of community and community development. Until very recently, much of Cavaliers' formal involvement within this domain has remained largely ignored both academically and locally. Simply put, unlike most football clubs, Cavaliers was rather more than an implicit space of community (development). At various points during the last three decades, the Cavaliers club has formally, as well as ideologically, been 'more than a football club.'

I have attempted to describe some of the ways in which the development of the social and community arm of the Cavaliers club was also connected – albeit often inadvertently – to changes within (black) Leicester's social, cultural and political landscape. I also highlighted the fact that the original purpose of Cavaliers social events was not political. These events were initially devised as a means to generate additional income to help finance Cavaliers' new Parkview facilities. Social functions at Cavaliers, however, quickly served a dual function. They doubled up as a platform which enabled certain club members to exercise sentiments of social obligation and, in turn, use the

events to target and reach-out to marginalised sections of the black community. It also became apparent that it was a combination of these burgeoning sentiments to assist the local community and a local government emphasis to encourage and support black-led community development projects during the end of the 1980s, which prompted Cavaliers to launch two formal community development projects during this period.

The Meadebrook Cavaliers Fun Day has, over the last decade-and-a-half, arguably become a central feature of the way in which the Cavaliers club is (re)presented, especially through the lens of a local newspaper – even possibly trumping the Cavaliers club’s identity as a symbol of local black football. This shift in local emphasis was set against the changing political race-relations discourses in Britain which characterised, crudely, the post and pre-2000 era. During this period the political race-relations agenda moved from celebrating cultural diversity and difference to insisting upon cultural integration. This transitional period provided a useful context in which to frame what we might describe as the *Leicester Mercury*’s representation of the Cavaliers club as a space which was formally, about ‘more than just football.’

Dominant discourses of community integration and community cohesion and the policies which followed, not only impacted on how Cavaliers was presented in the local media. They also prompted Cavaliers’ management committee to re-image the Cavaliers club. In an attempt to encourage cultural cohesion, government funding during this period was increasingly redirected to activities which promoted cohesion and less to those activities which promoted the interests of singular (and ‘non-community’ focused) groups. Thus, to re-access public funding the Cavaliers management committee was left with few alternatives but to re-brand the dominant identity of the club as a space of explicitly practiced community cohesion. By the same token, this movement distanced the Cavaliers club further from its original black-centred ideals and its original sporting purpose. Simply, to remain in existence today, wherever possible, the Cavaliers club must (re)present itself as a space which is as much about bringing Leicester’s different communities together, as it is about (black) men’s football success.

By analysing survey data gathered from the Fun Day carnival, the final section moved the discussion on from describing the changing community functions of the club, to

analysing exactly *which* communities the club, as a space of cultural cohesion, typically brings together. Initially, the data indicated that the Fun Day has become an important site for the bringing together of a small number of people of different ages, locations and ethnicities in late-modern Leicester. The data also suggests that community ‘bridging’ predominantly took place between Leicester’s African-Caribbean heritage and white communities. In the context of new community/cultural fusions, the data also hints at the club’s role as a conduit for a perhaps newly emerging sense of commonality between an African-Caribbean football club and some members from the local British South Asian communities.

The data also indicated that the Fun Day provided a dual community purpose. On the one hand it provides this community bridging function. At the same time it also provides a cultural maintenance - and even a resistance - function for a number of its African-Caribbean heritage attendees. In the local context, black geographical and occupational mobility has not only resulted in some black flight from the Meadebrooks area, but it has also impacted negatively on the availability of a particular kind of nostalgic black culture; a culture which, in part, hinged on the intense black presence within that locale.

In *Chapter 7*, I discussed in depth how Cavaliers’ ageing second-generation members point to their own black flight from the Meadebrooks area as contributors to the relative ‘disappearance’ of this traditional black culture in Leicester. For some of these older men the club has become one of the city’s last cultural bastions where that generation can ‘magically’ recover this particular sense of community/culture. Likewise, the Fun Day data indicates that some attendees (old and young) from the wider black community in Leicester also view the Cavaliers club/the Fun Day, as a means of (re)engaging with this particular - and often claimed to be diminishing - rendition of black culture. Subsequently, the Fun Day represents a complex and multi-purpose space. As a space of black resistance, Cavaliers is both something which serves a relatively small number of ageing second-generation African-Caribbean men *within* the club; and something which provides a similar (if simulated) function for older and younger African-Caribbeans who reside both in, and beyond, Leicester.

The data also indicates that some young black British parents were actively seeking out events steeped in this particular kind of black culture to enable their children to experience and remain familiar with what appears to be an increasingly elusive sense of black solidarity and a particular black culture. Some of the parents interviewed pointed out that they were bringing up their black-heritage children in white dominated environments. For this cohort in particular, spaces such as the Fun Day appeared to represent crucial sites which allowed them to redress what they perceived to be a resultant, cultural/social imbalance within their children's social realities. They are spaces which enable them to move their children's Caribbean cultural education, albeit briefly, from the abstract, into the tangible and the lived.

In sum, while the political and official role of the Cavaliers Fun Day currently, is to integrate different communities and facilitate a sense of inter-cultural common ground, ironically, it also has an important socio-cultural function which facilitates a parallel outcome. For the contemporary African-Caribbeans who attended (people from an ethnic minority which is perhaps the most culturally and socially integrated of all the post-World War Two British black migrant communities) the Fun Day represents an opportunity to maintain and hold on to their cultural individuality. In many ways the carnival is a cultural space where late-modern black-heritage people can resist the loss of certain African-Caribbean cultural markers. A loss which appears to have in part, been brought about by their 'successful' cultural integration into some mainstream institutions in white Britain.

Chapter 9

Some conclusions

This concluding chapter attempts to summarise the key findings and discusses the key themes of the thesis. Firstly, it does this with regards to what this case study adds to our knowledge on the history of local black sport in Britain. Secondly, it outlines what this analysis of a local BAME football club can tell us about the wider and changing condition of ‘blackness’ in the region and beyond.

The thesis has contributed to the literature on BAME communities in twentieth-century Britain in a number of ways. In a general sense, for example, it has highlighted how the settlement patterns of Leicester’s African-Caribbean community has mirrored the patterns of other immigrant communities in Leicester (and many other British cities),⁷⁵³ such as Leicester’s Jewish and Irish communities.⁷⁵⁴ Whereby the workers from the African-Caribbean originally settled in the centrally located Meadebrooks area and have since, gradually diffused across the county. It has also added empirical evidence which highlights that British African-Caribbeans are an extremely heterogeneous group.

The thesis has also added to literature centred on the connections between the ‘black’ experience in Britain and leisure and local sport. It has indicated that both were important pastimes for second and subsequent generations of black people living in post-World War Two Leicester (albeit in different ways and to varying degrees). It adds to the observations made by scholars such as Dee, Johal and Burdsey, by providing empirical evidence which indicates that in a similar fashion to some Jewish and Asian communities living in Britain, sport and in particular local football was, for this group of African-Caribbean men, often about more than just playing a game.⁷⁵⁵ It was at times

⁷⁵³ Panikos Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945* (Manchester, 1994)

⁷⁵⁴ Jack Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present Volume 2: Modern City* (London, 1974)

⁷⁵⁵ David Dee, *Jews and British Sport: Integration, Ethnicity and Anti-Semitism, c1880-c1960* (PhD Thesis, De Montfort University, 2011); Sanjiv Johal, *The Sport of Lions: The Punjabi-Sikhs in Britain* (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2002); Daniel Burdsey, “If I Ever Play

deeply embedded within wider notions of sociability, status, identity politics, border work and community.

The thesis has also demonstrated that in addition to politics, employment and housing, leisure and local football were also spaces in Britain where ‘black people’ experienced hostility, marginalisation, exclusion and overt and covert forms of racism.⁷⁵⁶ Against this, this non-professional black sports club often provided a resistance and even cultural maintenance function for the predominantly black men who constituted it. This was in a similar fashion to the role played by certain churches and pubs and other sports clubs for Leicester’s Irish community (during the interwar years) and London’s Jewish population (in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century) respectively.⁷⁵⁷ By the same token, this local black football club, like many of these other BAME created sites of identity and community maintenance, served a dual function. They also doubled as important points of entry (or cultural interfaces) between the BAME communities which they served and the host nation. Subsequently, the thesis has demonstrated how this – and I would contend other – local-level black sports clubs in Leicester has contributed greatly to the integration (even assimilation) of local African-Caribbean heritage men into mainstream life within the region, during the course of the last four decades.

The thesis has also widened existing knowledge on local-level football and on the tradition of voluntarism in Britain (during the second half of the twentieth century). It has provided a critical analysis of the connections between local level football (clubs), masculinity, ethnicity, social class and imagined perceptions of self and community. It also demonstrates the usefulness of analysing local sports clubs (as cultural spaces), as a way of gaining a deeper and more holistic insight into the lives of urban based BAME communities.

Many of the emergent issues and themes from this case study are loosely applicable to other urban based, male-orientated and local-level sports clubs. Early Cavaliers teams,

Football, Dad, Can I Play for England or India?’ British Asians, Sport and Diasporic National Identities’ *Sociology – Diasporic Identities* (40) 1 (2006) pp.11–28

⁷⁵⁶ Daniel Lawrence *Black Migrants: White Natives* (London, 1974)

⁷⁵⁷ See David Nash et al, ‘Organizational and Associational Life’ in David Nash and David Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Gloucestershire, 1993); Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945*

for example, were – like various other local sports clubs across Britain – tied to a specific urban space, community and were emblematic of specific group of people.⁷⁵⁸ Likewise, tensions caused by the club's dual desire for 'sporting' success (which at times required importing higher calibre players from other locales) and to remain culturally centred (through the production of teams which continue to consist almost exclusively of locally-based players), is a theme which should resonate with most sports enthusiasts and sport interested scholars. As should the narrative of ageing club members (of all ethnicities) arguing that the cultural importance of their own local football club appears to be diminishing with each new generation. Or that the importance placed on playing the game itself, is a point of distinction between them and youth today.

Physical, social, geographical and sporting change to a football club, often – to those who constitute it - represent a distancing from the club's original connection to a specific and imagined community (identity). Taunton points out, however, that community (identity) is 'a profoundly nostalgic concept', which 'at its core is always disappearing behind the last hill.'⁷⁵⁹ His point reminds us that complaints of this nature are not new. Nor are they confined to any one community or club. Taunton does acknowledge, however, that there are 'times at which something like a loss of community has an objective empirical basis'.⁷⁶⁰ This point is especially applicable if the threatened 'community' (identity) is one which coalesces around a specific and easily identifiable – albeit crude - marker. In Cavaliers' case, the notion of 'community' was often bound up with the notion of 'race.' In this instance, concerns over the Cavaliers club's identity moving from one which was – in an essentialist manner - mono-racial ('black') to something which is visibly multi-racial, appear to be valid.

It is clear that many of the emergent themes summarised in the following two sub-sections (on the history of the Cavaliers club and on the black community which constituted it) may, in a more generic fashion, be transferable to other sports and community settings. In this case study, however, these themes were often intensified,

⁷⁵⁸ Adam Brown, 'Our club, Our rules': Fan Communities at FC United of Manchester' *Soccer & Society* (9) 3 (2008) pp.346-358

⁷⁵⁹ Matthew Taunton, 'Ties that bound' *Times Literary Supplement* July 31, 2009

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

exaggerated and made significantly more complex I would argue by adding the issues of minority 'race' and ethnicity.⁷⁶¹

The history of the social development of a BAME football club in the East Midlands c. 1970-2010: A summary

In *Chapter 1*, I identified a number of gaps in the existing literature on local football in Britain – especially with regards to local level BAME football *clubs*. Noteworthy absences in knowledge coalesced around the origins of BAME football clubs. We also know little about how park-based BAME teams can evolve into established football clubs with private facilities. What effects does seeking or achieving sporting success have on a club's ability to remain rooted within, or reflective of, their local BAME communities? How, and in what ways, has the development of local BAME football clubs been influenced by wider (and recent) political and economic circumstances at the local and/or national level. In response, the thesis I would contend has progressed knowledge in these areas.

In *Chapter 3* and *Chapter 4*, the origins of the Cavaliers club were explored. So were the factors which underpinned its expansion between 1970 and 1980 and its ability to dominate local park level football. The formation of the Cavaliers organisation was a part of a wave of black-led community organisations which emerged during the first few decades of African-Caribbean settlement in post-war Britain. Evidence indicated that the majority of these organisations emerged in response to the racial mistreatment and marginalisation experienced by first-generation Caribbean workers in employment and housing. They were also a response to a lack of black political representation. Unlike these other organisations, the creation of the Cavaliers club was a response to the specific conditions which shaped the lives of black immigrant youth in Leicester (the second-generation). This included a lack of suitable youth provisions and exclusions from mainstream sporting spaces. It was also apparent that for the members who founded the Cavaliers club in the early 1970s, this project was not initially and

⁷⁶¹ Yasmin Gunaratnam, *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power* (London, 2003)

consciously designed to challenge racism. Nor was it intended to be about front line politics.

Wider processes of racism in local sport translated into many young black footballers being unable to access organised football in the city. In turn, this left the Meadebrooks' best black talent with few other footballing options beyond joining the Cavaliers team. These structural processes were central factors behind Cavaliers' initial expansion. They also meant that what later became the Cavaliers *club* could boast a group of players whose talent far exceeded that of the other teams at the lowly park-based level, and enabled them to dominate this level of football in the county. As a space which brought together large numbers of excluded black youth and gave them an opportunity to prove what the founders described as 'sporting points', meant that the Cavaliers project quickly, if inadvertently, also became bound-up within the wider politics of 'race', community and resistance. A combination of these factors and motivations meant that by the end of the 1970s, Meadebrook Cavaliers had become an established force in local parks-football and a direct challenger to local mainstream and white sporting hegemony.

Set against these stories of origin, *Chapter 2* provided a rare example of the complex processes which enable - or block - successful parks teams to transform into established football clubs. In Cavaliers' case, we witnessed its move from a parks team into a club with its own private facilities and one which paid players to play. Most black clubs fail to make this transformation because of a lack of resources and institutional forms of exclusion. The chapter opened by highlighting that the award of their own private facilities by the local city council was largely the consequence of fears about a repeat of the black social unrest which had swept through Leicester and across Britain in 1981. From their new local government sponsored base, the organisation quickly expanded into something of a harbour organisation for other locally-based black sports teams. It also enabled Cavaliers to access and dominate junior level football in Leicester and, in 1989, to finally enter into senior league competition.

Data indicated that the decision to become a player-paying club (for a brief period), was about *more* than just competing with the financial muscle of other clubs operating at the Senior League level. In many ways it was a response to new commercial opportunities emerging for black talent within the non-league game. Furthermore, the sense of

obligation to play for their local black club, which had compelled many of the older black players to play for Cavaliers, was noticeably weaker among this new generation of local black talent. These new sporting and cultural circumstances impacted negatively on Cavaliers' ability to remain a force in local football at the Senior League level throughout much of the 1990s. For a section of the Cavaliers management committee and membership the logical response was to compete financially for the best local talent. Against this, the chapter concluded by sketching out some of nascent tensions brought about by the club's decision to pay players as an attempt to remain successful on the pitch. Pertinently, it was clear that for certain club members this signalled the end of Cavaliers as an authentic 'local' and community-based black football club. For others, it signalled the end of the football team's ability to symbolise a particular notion of 'black community' solidarity.

Chapter 6 tracked more recent developments in local football. By tracing the club's transformation into a charity organisation, the chapter provided a case study of one of the coping strategies employed by a BAME club to survive in the post-2008 economic climate. The chapter began by highlighting that the motives behind this development were also driven by two other factors: (1) The end of the club's maintenance grant from the local council in 2007; (2) The club's inability, as a predominantly sport-based organisation, to re-access local government funding. Even at this preliminary stage it was clear that charity status had already had a noticeable effect on the identity, mission and the governance of the organisation. It also placed new financial pressures on other areas of the club – most notably, on the men's senior football section. Reducing the amount the club paid in fines for ill-discipline was one avenue which the club explored. To try to achieve this end, Cavaliers adopted an almost zero-tolerance strategy for players who refused to pay fines and/or for young black players who were 'deviant' in other ways.

Against these kinds of disciplinary developments, large numbers of local and African-Caribbean-heritage players have departed the club in recent years. At the same time, strong perceptions among some of the new drivers of senior football at the club - of local youth as being particularly problematic (and an obstacle to achieving sporting

success) - have prompted the first-team actively to seek out better disciplined players – often from outside of the city.

This manoeuvre has also diversified the previously ‘black-centred’ identity of the Cavaliers first-team, as a noticeable number of Cavaliers newly recruited players possess little, if any, visible African-Caribbean heritage. Of course the changing cultural demographic of Cavaliers’ first-team was also linked to wider processes of change. This includes increasing cultural and ethnic fusion; greater levels of BAME geographic and social integration (or ‘black flight’); and the arrival of new immigrant groups to Leicester (and then within the vicinity of the Cavaliers club). Unsurprisingly, this new diversification has elicited some ambivalent responses, especially among the club’s older-membership and ex-players. Publicly, almost all of the ageing black men within the club might describe this as a ‘progressive’ development. In private, however, certain voices bemoan the fact that their local club’s first-team squad is becoming visibly ‘whitened.’ More importantly, they bemoan the fact that ‘their’ team now possesses relatively few players with whom they have social, kinship or cultural connections.

These ambivalent messages invite a much more important and significant question: What is meant by - or what actually constitutes - a local ‘black’ football club today? From the data gathered, it appears that the defining features of this, as with most social constructs, are multi-faceted and largely dependent on the wider context or the perception of the individual club member. For many of the club’s first-time and local visitors (who now usually attend social events), for example, Cavaliers is their local club simply because it is the nearest (voluntary) sports organisation to where they live. This definition appears also to be applicable to many of the club’s latest generation of black and non-black players/members. For the club’s ageing black members (some who founded the club) the answer to what makes/made Cavaliers their local club appears to be rather more complex. It requires them to feel connected to it and its players in very specific cultural, social and (visibly) racialised ways.

The final chapter (*Chapter 8*) provided a historical overview of the growth of the community (development) arm of the organisation. The purpose of this was two-fold: firstly it provided critical and empirical-based insights into the ways in which, and reasons why, local football clubs may be pressed into ‘appropriate’ other forms of

leisure and social activities; secondly, to identify some of the motives behind these organisation's decisions to provide these kinds of community-development and 'progressive' diversions.

Data presented here suggested that the motives behind the decision to offer social and other leisure activities, in this instance - and at boardroom level - were driven by economic triggers. It also indicated that at the same time this development had enabled certain club members to exercise sentiments of community obligation and solidarity by 'reaching out' to more marginalised sections of Leicester's black community. It was these kinds of additional motivations, alongside opportunities to raise the club's profile, which underpinned Cavaliers' decision to host two government sponsored (and non-leisure-centred) community-development projects during the 1980s and 1990s.

Attention then shifted to analysing the increasing promotion of the club's culturally diverse youth and mini-soccer divisions and the club's Annual Fun Day carnival, which has taken place over the last decade. I argued that this recent development was connected to two issues: (1) The club's attempts to bridge the financial gap caused by the expiry of its annual maintenance grant in 2007. (2) New (local) government policies/initiatives designed to encourage, facilitate and promote what we might describe as community-led sites of cohesion. This last point also correlated with the local media's growing coverage of the Cavaliers carnival over the last five years.

In their attempts to qualify for local funding (and to satisfy charity status) Cavaliers' board found itself with few alternatives but to 're-brand' the central mission of the club: from one centred on black sporting success, to one now formally about promoting inter-community relations and community cohesion practices. The point that some local clubs are recognising that by offering more gender and culturally 'inclusive' football provisions, they can qualify for local government funding (alongside the lucrative nature of such provision), offers some additional context for Bradbury's observation that an increasing number of BAME football clubs in the region are now offering cross-ethnic mini-soccer.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶² Steven Bradbury, 'From Racial Exclusions to New Inclusions: Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Football Clubs in the East Midlands of England' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (46) 1 (2010) pp.1-22

The historical arm of the thesis has progressed knowledge in various ways. It demonstrates, empirically and explicitly, for example, how the sporting, physical and social development of this football club has been intimately connected to the wider political, social and sporting terrains within which it has existed and changed.⁷⁶³ It has also widened our understanding of the relationship between BAME sports clubs, regional football associations and the state. By the same token, this history has also illuminated how the growth and changing functions of the organisation were intimately connected to the changing attitudes and social realities of the club's African-Caribbean membership and the changing demands of the wider black community. Put another way, the complex history of this 'black' football club has also provided key insights into the social and cultural transformations which have taken place within Leicester's African-Caribbean community during this period – and the ways in which local sport has contributed to these changes.

The shifting identities of (second-generation) black sportsmen in Leicester c.1970-2010

In the opening chapter, I argued that little is currently known about the ways in which local football has played a part in changing intra-racial divisions within the African-Caribbean consciousness. In response, the thesis has offered some insights into what playing football, the creation of a football club and a continuing attachment to it over the last four decades, tells us about the changing identity politics of a particular group of second-generation black sportsmen in Leicester. Let me address these issues in a little more detail.

Local sport and the displacement of 'old' social divisions among second-generation Caribbean youth in Leicester

The thesis shed light on some of the ways in which local football as a social activity in association to this particular East Midlands football club, helped to displace some of the social divisions, which characterised its members' consciousness prior to their arrival in

⁷⁶³ Anthony King, 'After The Crunch: A New Era For The Beautiful Game in Europe?' *Soccer & Society* (11) 6 (2010) pp.880–89

Britain. The following extract from Andrea Levy's World War Two novel, *Small Island* highlights the way the central character, a Jamaican-born, aspiring middle class and 'light-brown-skinned' teacher, Hortence, displays apathy - even antipathy - for her black-skinned and working-class pupils. It offers a neat insight into the classed and complexion-based divisions which permeated the identity politics of pre-World War Two Jamaica (and the Caribbean more widely).

There were sixty pupils in the first class I had to teach... Sixty nappy-headed, runny-nosed, foul-smelling ragamuffins. Sixty *black* faces... I was used to children from good homes. In Mr and Mrs Ryder's school wealthy, fair-skinned and high-classed [children] sat ruly, waiting for my instruction... In that school no child ever... subtracted five from ten and made the answer fifty-one. (my emphasis)⁷⁶⁴

The quote offers us a useful reminder of the kinds of intra-racial (and inter-island) divisions which existed between the first-generation of Caribbean workers who relocated to post-war Britain – and their second-generation children. It also provides a useful starting point from which to propose the ways in which the identity of this migrant community shifted from something which was initially considerably fractured, to something which was, for a brief while, more homogenous, and then back to something which was once again fractured – although by 'new' social factors.

Chapter 3 and *Chapter 4* emphasised how, unlike in the Caribbean, white Britain did not recognise the West Indian workers' unique island, class or complexion features. Here, most black workers were routinely subjected to the same bullying, exploitation, harassment, violence, and exclusion by the host nation. These 'black' workers were also subjected to a housing ghettoization in the slum areas of British conurbations. Academics such as James, identified how, during the first decades of settlement, these circumstances in Britain transformed the black experience from one which, in the Caribbean, was socially and economically diverse, to one which was for-the-most-part, routinely ghettoized.⁷⁶⁵ This blanket and ghettoized social reality in many ways, and inadvertently, helped to forge a new and more unified African-Caribbean identity

⁷⁶⁴ Andrea Levy, *Small Island* (London, 2009) p68

⁷⁶⁵ Winston James, 'Migration, Racism and Identity Formation: The Caribbean Experience in Britain' in Winston James and Clive Harris, eds., *Inside Babylon* (London, 1993)

among the black British workers. Importantly, this was not an identity-label which was simply allocated, but one with which the workers themselves bought into.

Obviously, as young children, many of the founders of the Cavaliers club did not occupy directly, the same social and employment spaces which their first-generation parents had done during the 1950s and 1960s. This was not to suggest, however, that their children did not experience racial discrimination here in Britain: they did. In *Chapter 4* I sketched out explicitly, the experiences of second-generation black youth in 1960s Leicester. I highlighted how, for the most part, school-age immigrants experienced discrimination and marginalisation within the education system, the youth service, leisure spaces and, in particular, within local sport. Against this, many of Cavaliers' founder members argued that for them, it was their similar experiences of marginalisation within local sport, alongside the emotive bonds of unity facilitated by playing together for their own black team, which were the primary catalysts for *their* own subscription to a growing and wider consensus about an emerging and reasonably coherent and common African-Caribbean identity.

Social mobility and the emergence of 'new' social divisions among second-generation black Britons

The emergent tensions within the micro-politics of the Cavaliers club, especially between 1980 and 2000, pointed to the presence of new kinds of social divisions opening up among the second-generation black men who constituted the club (and in the wider black community). The thesis demonstrated how, on one level, these divisions were facilitated by uneven levels of social mobility among this group. In the context of the identity politics of Britain's second-generation black community, the 1980s was a period in which nascent identity fractures began to emerge within this particular generation. Prior to this period, black ghettoization and a routine experience of overt racism in Britain had helped to facilitate what we might describe as a more singular black experience (and identity) narrative. This generic experience underpinned equally strong notions of solidarity (and unrest) within much of Britain's emerging second-generation black community – the majority of which, by this period, had reached adulthood. Gilroy's notion of 'diaspora consciousness' provided a useful conceptual

framework, one which enabled the thesis to identify how increasingly complex and fractured images of blackness emerging locally, were at times influenced by developments taking place across the Atlantic.⁷⁶⁶ By the same token, it also enabled us to connect ‘new’ fractures within this previously singular black-British consciousness and experience, to other social and political developments taking place at the national and municipal levels.

This last point is of particular pertinence here. After the 1980s race riots, central and local government responded by launching a series of policies and initiatives designed to re-enfranchise (and control) black-British youth. Within this wave of initiatives, pathways into mainstream – and even white collar – employment, primarily within local government, were opened up to a small section of the black community. New employment and education opportunities for a limited number of young black men and women in Leicester, meant the city’s thus far, ghettoized and socially ‘homogenised’ cohort of second-generation black men and women had, by the second-half of the decade, started to fracture, slowly at first, into new, diverging socio-economic and class realities.

The Cavaliers club, as a socio-cultural space, offered us a lens through which some of these newly emerging intra-racial and class divergences within Leicester’s second-generation black community could be observed. New employment opportunities provided by local government, meant that during this period the Cavaliers club witnessed the emergence of what we might describe as a skilled and formally educated black professional, within its second-generation membership. Club members who possessed formal qualifications and a newly raised status were quickly utilised by the club’s management committee. In turn, this resulted in many of Cavaliers’ now ‘professionalised’ club-members being fast-tracked onto the club’s management committee.

While this manoeuvre served a pragmatic purpose, it also fuelled a growing perception within sections of Cavaliers’ membership that new types of class-based divisions were emerging within their membership (and within the wider black community). Sections of the club’s working class membership interpreted the fast-tracking of professional black

⁷⁶⁶ Paul Gilroy, *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* (London, 2000)

men onto the management committee, for example, as a class-based project aimed at ring-fencing the committee. The pervasiveness and persistence of this perception was perhaps illustrated most clearly in the fact that currently, there are many white members at Cavaliers, who point to their low class status - rather than their 'racial' differences - as the primary reason for their inability to access Cavaliers' allegedly 'middle class' management committee.

Increasing intra-racial and class based fractures within Cavaliers' second-generation membership appeared also to be reflected in what was a widening diversity of meanings and resistance functions which certain club members ascribe to the club, currently. *Chapter 7*, for example, illustrated that for some of Cavaliers' now ageing, second-generation and working class black men (who largely make up Cavaliers' cohort of coaches), the club continues to provide a platform via which they can continue to (re)construct an alternative and positive masculine identity and accrue social capital within local neighbourhoods. By contrast, for the few second-generation members who have managed to achieve varying degrees of social mobility, the club - and their attachment to it - now seems to serve a very different purpose to the ones which they identified as socially and economically ghettoized young men.

For Cavaliers' upwardly mobile black members the club can enable them to resist new forces/absences which have largely been brought about by their own social mobilisations. For example, for some members who have experienced what we might describe as 'black flight' from the Meadebrooks area - and relocated to more affluent and largely white, suburban pockets in the county - the Cavaliers club is often employed as an anchoring for cultural space. It provides these dis-located club members with a platform to re-engage with a particular kind of black community, one which seldom exists within their new lived social realities.

Black mobility in sport and the emergence of 'new' sport-based divisions among second-generation black Britons

The thesis has shed light on some of the ways in which greater 'black' access into mainstream local football networks in the East Midlands pluralised what had been a largely homogenous black experience (and identity) in local level sport in the region.

We might loosely summarise the section above as a narrative of successful black social and geographical mobility and its adverse effects on a singular black identity (and on sensibilities of black unity and community togetherness). In *chapters five-through-eight* I have demonstrated that this narrative was also, to varying degrees, mirrored in developments taking place in the wider black sporting experience from the 1980s onwards. Put another way, in the wider context of black-British identity politics, the late 1980s and early 1990s was the period when nascent fractures began to emerge within this particular generation's sporting identities and experiences.

The 1980s witnessed black sportsmen trail-blaze inroads into England's professional game at the national and international level. Alongside this, international football had been dominated by successive mainly black Brazilian national teams for the previous twenty-five years. Locally, successive Cavaliers teams had made their own more modest progress through the lower leagues in the East Midlands (often beating more established semi-professional clubs in various competitions).

By the end of the decade, these developments had prompted some of the region's more progressive white clubs to begin recruiting black players, and in particular, black players from the Cavaliers club. This included one Premier League club which recruited an ex-Cavaliers player via a Football Conference club. According to club folklore, another Cavaliers player caught the attention of the then Nottingham Forest Manager, Brian Clough. After watching him play, Clough was alleged to have told the player: 'You're a good player, lad. Not good enough for my team, though: but still a good player'.⁷⁶⁷

Prior to this period, the black experience in local football was characterised by routine exclusions from mainstream (semi)professional football clubs. These conditions had in part, facilitated high levels of black empathy, solidarity and shared ideas of identity among local black players. Thus, for much of its first two decades of existence, the Cavaliers club possessed a cohort of second-generation black men who had extremely similar sporting experiences, perceptions of self, and in turn, uses for the football club. Up until the 1990s, football at Cavaliers was predominantly about black men (re)constructing alternative and positive masculine identities, the accruing of local

⁷⁶⁷ Fieldwork Journal October 24, 2011

neighbourhood capital, and demonstrating what black footballers, as a collective, could achieve.

The late 1980s and early 1990s represented something of a turning point in the black (male) sporting experience at the local level. Increased mobility within mainstream football for a select number of local black men – as in employment - resulted in the emergence of a new and more (semi)professionalised black footballer. Unlike most of their peers, these elite black sportsmen's football tutelage – even their basic socialisation - took place increasingly within the mainstream game. This exposed them to different football philosophies, ways of playing, and expectations. It also exposed them to new and conflicting experiences of both racism and inclusion.

Against a backdrop of widening access into mainstream sport and in turn, a changing set of sporting experiences (for a select few second-generation sportsmen), it became evident that some elite black sportsmen in Leicester began to express new and markedly different attitudes compared to their more static peers. Playing football for some second-generation players, for example, became less about showcasing what local 'black' football, in community terms, could do. Football increasingly became bound-up with new sensibilities which coalesced around notions of individual progress and maximising new commercial opportunities.⁷⁶⁸ With regards to their experiences of racism in sport, their commercial opportunities and new attitudes, the standard of football which they played and their elite status in sport, these young black sportsmen represented what might be described as a new type – even a new 'class' - of second-generation black (non-professional) footballer, here in the East Midlands.

Commercial opportunities for local level black footballers have increased exponentially over the last two-decades. This has contributed to the emergence of a more heterogeneous black sporting experience – and identity – in the region. This fracturing has facilitated new divisions and new tensions within the Cavaliers club. In *Chapter 5* and *Chapter 6*, for example, I described how some ageing, second-generation Cavaliers coaches, who had had full careers within the park-based leagues, and similarly aged

⁷⁶⁸ While these developments and attitudes were more characteristic of the third-generation black experience in local football in the city, it was also applicable to a number of second-generation players, especially the younger members of this group (who were closer in age and experience to the emerging third-generation of players).

black Cavaliers coaches, who had had careers within the (semi)professional game, expressed markedly different approaches to – and notions of obligation towards – managing the club’s current crop of (deviant) black players. These polarisations, however, were also reflective of the two different types of second-generation African-Caribbean coaches who had differing class statuses and very differing geographic/social relationships with local black youth within the club.

Such divisions were also manifested in tensions between some of Cavaliers’ professionalised players – now coaches – and Cavaliers players who had been plucked from the park-based leagues. Frequently, Cavaliers players who had grown-up playing park-based football were often unable – and at times unwilling – to attain the new professional standards of conduct expected by Cavaliers’ professionally-schooled black coaches. This schism was compounded by the inability and unwillingness by some of these coaches to empathise with the sporting, social and occasionally deviant realities of some local players.

It is important not to overstate these kinds of sporting (or class) polarisations in the everyday interactions between black sportsmen inside the club. Within the club, these divisions were often, formally, ‘left-at-the door.’ In fact, in many ways the club’s membership – and in particular, those involved with the senior football team – still display strong notions of camaraderie and unity. These existing allegiances are similar to those that various older club members claimed had once characterised previous Cavaliers teams during periods when its black players’ wider social and sporting realities were arguably rather more similar.

In the Cavaliers first-team, exhibitions of unity were most visible during social meetings/events, within the bar after matches, in changing room banter and within a sort of ‘siege mentality’ (which occasionally saw Cavaliers pitch themselves metaphorically and sometimes literally against the opposition, the officials and the County Football Association). Unity was also demonstrated through very clear subscriptions to prescribed forms of ‘masculine hegemony’.⁷⁶⁹ On certain levels then, strong sentiments of togetherness continue to exist among Cavaliers’ second-generation membership

⁷⁶⁹ Andrew Parker, ‘Soccer, Servitude and Sub-Cultural Identity: Football Traineeship and Masculine Construction’ *Soccer & Society* (2) 1 (2001) pp.59-80

(Although it should be noted that today, in a general sense, this camaraderie extends to include large numbers of black men who were born, raised and reside outside of the city and players who possess little, if any, African-Caribbean heritage).

Despite such clear examples of what we might describe as displays of shared identity within the club, it is also apparent that Cavaliers is no longer a space occupied by black second-generation sportsmen who subscribe inherently to similar kinds of embroidered ideas of community solidarity and who possess similar socio-cultural features, simply because they are members of the same generation or racialised group. This is a noteworthy development. It is highly unlikely that, even two-decades ago, the Cavaliers club could draw on black sportsmen of the same generation, with such markedly different social and sporting realities and in turn, perceptions of social and sporting blackness.

Elsewhere I have noted that Bulmer and Solomos (and others) have recognised that the contemporary black experience in late-modern Britain is something which is increasingly fragmented by numerous and complex social factors.⁷⁷⁰ This case study has progressed this position by demonstrating some of the ways in which black identities in late-modern Leicester are also fractured in *sporting* ways. With regards to this final point, this case study of the Cavaliers club provides an apt example of the ways in which certain sections of the club's current cohort of second-generation black men appear to be characterised by high levels of sport-based apathy, as much as they are by empathy – arguably even more so.

Final comments

This thesis contributes to the existing knowledge of urban sport in a number of ways. It has, for example, added to knowledge about local sport in Leicester and the contribution of immigrant communities to the present sporting landscape. It has demonstrated that not only did immigrants play in local leagues for established white teams, but that they also added their own teams (and clubs) to Leicester's cohort of Saturday and Sunday

⁷⁷⁰ Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, 'Introduction' in Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, eds., *Researching Race and Racism* (London, 2004)

football clubs. The thesis has also contributed to the wider historiography of the East Midlands' African Caribbean communities, which traditionally, has been heavily focused on the black experience in housing, work and politics.⁷⁷¹ Through an analysis of their experiences in local football and leisure, a more rounded picture of the black (male) experience in Britain has been gleaned. Furthermore, it has underscored the complexity and heterogeneity of Britain's black community over time.

Existing literature has shown that it is perhaps easier – certainly more common – to think of social identities as somehow 'whole' things which are broken solely by different generational experiences. Within the historical narrative of this particular group of second-generation black sportsmen, the thesis has challenged this position by demonstrating that generation-based social identities are also fluid and subject to *intra-generational* change. Data indicates that during the period of the research focus, the experiences or defining characteristics of this particular generation had continuously changed. At one point it was largely homogenous. At another, it was more plural. I have also attempted to illustrate that in either case, these changes were connected to the wider social and political conditions within which their realities were couched. This recognition does not counter accepted notions of generation-based discontinuities within black social identities. Instead it attempts to emphasise further, their complexity and heterogeneity. That is, intra-generational fractures exist alongside – even within – the individual's wider subscriptions to larger and generation based identity markers. It also highlights the situational nature of identity borders. Simply put, these borders were not salient at all times in the same ways.

This was often exemplified during conversations with various second-generation African-Caribbean participants. They frequently overlooked what were, at other times, important intra-generational differences, particularly when discussing how their own generation was distinguishable from the previous generation. In this regard, sport was frequently used to demonstrate such distinctions. One commonly cited difference between second and first-generation black people in Leicester, for example, was their embrace of

⁷⁷¹ Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives* Also see Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration & British Society, 1871-1971* (London, 1988); John Rex, *The Ghetto and the Underclass* (Aldershot, 1988); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1991); George Watley, 'The Cultural Currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c.1960-1990' *Midland History* (36) 2 (2011) pp.245-61

football and their parents' preference for cricket. Generation-contained discontinuities expressed through sport were also cited during discussions centred on distinguishing second-generation club members from third-generation members.

Some second-generation participants, for example, argued that the third-generation African-Caribbeans were less bound by the kinds of cultural obligations which had steered previous waves of black youth unerringly into the Cavaliers club. Black youth at the club today, were also said to have been raised in a more tolerant, culturally fused and more affluent social reality.⁷⁷² This was claimed to have contributed to their markedly different experiences of racism in sport (and in the wider society). Mainly for these reasons, certain second-generation club members argue that the social, cultural and historical importance of this particular black sporting space is not as relevant to many of the club's current third-generation players as it is/was to them. Interestingly, this last point was not something which was voiced solely by second-generation club members. It was also 'played back' within a small number of accounts taken from Cavaliers' third-generation black players.

This last point raises important questions about modern black youth and their sporting experiences in late-modern Leicester. What does playing local football mean to African-Caribbean heritage youth today? What constraints does playing football help to resist for this generation? What does participation in local football tell us about the identity politics, border work, and wider black experience of black youth in twenty-first century Leicester? A critical exploration which addresses these points would provide not only a useful comparative piece of research, but it would enable us to gauge a more comprehensive picture of the continuing and wider historiography of Britain's African-Caribbean community.

This thesis has illustrated the ways in which factors such as class, generation, location, profession *and* sport have been implicated in pluralising the black experience narrative. The extent to which the black-British identity (and the meanings ascribed it by different black individuals) has been shown to be fractured in this case study - alongside existing arguments of black heterogeneity - prompts the question: How useful today is the

⁷⁷² Bradbury, 'From Racial Exclusions to New Inclusions: Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Football Clubs in the East Midlands of England'

blanket term ‘black’ community or ‘black’ identity? More importantly, are there times when this way of thinking about Britain’s ‘black’ African-Caribbean community might obscure critical analysis more than it enables it?⁷⁷³ If so, might the term ‘post-blackness’ (as a reference to the existence of multiple, contrasting and even conflicting interpretations of blackness) provide a more analytically and conceptually useful descriptor - and an appropriate starting point for future work in this area?

Against the pluralities of ‘blackness’ evidenced within this case study, I also argue that we might even describe late-modern Leicester as a space characterised by examples of ‘post-racism.’ This is not to claim, of course, that we live in a period or in places where racism no longer exists. Instead, I argue the contrary. That if we are in a period characterised by multiple – and at times, polarised – experiences/images of blackness, it follows that we must also exist in a period characterised by multiple experiences of racism. In sum, the evidence presented throughout this thesis – alongside the intra-racial based and empathic apathies present between my black participants and I (as discussed in *Chapter 2*) - suggests that experiences and meanings associated with being ‘black’ should no longer be *assumed* to be shared by all black men living in cities like late-modern Leicester, even if such men occupy the same physical, social and sporting spaces – or the same generational experience. Of course, however, further empirical research, such as those proposals suggested above, would need to be conducted before such grand claims can move beyond tentative speculation.

⁷⁷³ Jon Garland et al, ‘Hearing Lost Voices: Issues in Researching ‘Hidden’ Minority Ethnic Communities’ *British Journal of Criminology* (46) 3 (2006) pp.423–437

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